

RANCHING IN RENO AND SPARKS

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Description

As the twentieth century drew to a close, physical changes rendered the Truckee Meadows nearly unrecognizable to those who had helped build the community. Both Reno and Sparks had experienced major expansion since 1960, largely to accommodate a growing number of new residents who had no knowledge or appreciation of the area's ranching past. The two chroniclers included in this volume help to document and describe some of the last ranches to operate in what are now almost entirely urban portions of the Reno-Sparks area. Interviewed in 1998, both Maureen Brady and Art Cerfoglio had owned local ranches that were either in the process of being developed, or had been dramatically diminished due to urban growth. These interviews paint vivid pictures of everyday life in early Reno and Sparks before agriculture became politicized, a process documented in two separate volumes focusing specifically on Water Rights and the Sagebrush Rebellion in Nevada. The years covered here were not halcyon days. Both chroniclers describe desperate times and hard work. Maureen, the eastern seaboard daughter of Irish immigrants, entered the ranching and farming world as an outsider, yet she and Art, salty and confident, the ultimate insider, moved in the same world and knew each other. Both Art Cerfoglio and Maureen Brady passed away in 2003.

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RANCHING IN RENO AND SPARKS

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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PREFACE

The University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) was established in 1964 to record, preserve, and provide access to primary-source oral histories documenting aspects of the history and culture of Nevada and the Intermountain West.

In order to make the information presented accessible to a broad range of patrons, the collection's transcripts are lightly edited for readability. While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the "uhs," "ahs," and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context.

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INTRODUCTION

As the end of the twentieth century neared, physical changes rendered the Truckee Meadows nearly unrecognizable to those who helped build the community. Sparks in particular had experienced explosive growth, largely to accommodate a growing number of new residents who had no knowledge or appreciation of the area's ranching past. The original scope of this project was quite modest: to identify and document the few remaining ranches before they too disappeared without a trace. Chroniclers were tracked down because they owned or had owned local ranches that were either in the process of being developed, or had been dramatically diminished due to urban growth. Each interviewee recommended another person, who recommended another, and so on, until the recommendations made a full circle.

Even as ranching landscapes continued to disappear, the project grew and changed directions. The Sagebrush Rebellion and water rights emerged as central issues. Both represented at once history and current events as tensions were growing in Elko County between locals and the Forest Service, and Churchill and Washoe counties struggled over water. The interview dates tell the story. Later interviews about ranching in the region dealt almost entirely with one or the other of those hot-button topics. Intermediate interviews touched on controversy, but also revealed the challenges of ranching or farming in an increasingly urban environment. As the topics coalesced, separate oral history volumes were prepared on the subjects of Water Rights and the Sagebrush Rebellion in Nevada, and many stories of ranching in Northern Nevada can be found in those collections.

Only two of the first interviews, with Maureen Brady and Art Cerfoglio, painted vivid pictures of everyday life in early Reno before agriculture became politicized. These were not halcyon days. Both chroniclers describe desperate times and hard work. Maureen, the eastern seaboard daughter of Irish immigrants, entered the ranching and farming world as an outsider, yet she and Art, salty and confident, the ultimate insider, moved in the same world and knew each other.

On a personal note, these were two of my favorite people, different as they were. Art met with me on the UNR campus, cheerfully telling stories and thumping my desk for emphasis. At one point, we went on a day-long arm-waving tour of Reno as he pointed out where the old ranches had been and introduced me around. Only months earlier, Maureen and I had shared several summer mornings in her son's Washoe Valley home, drinking tea and laughing as she told stories of how the girl smitten with a rodeo cowboy grew into the woman who saw need all around her and never turned anyone away.

About the Interviewer

Not quite a Nevada native, Susan Imswiler Agee moved to northern Nevada as a child, attending Sparks schools, and earning a Master's in history from the University of Nevada, Reno. Her interest in the Spanish Springs ranching community was sparked by the realization that the ranches of her childhood were rapidly disappearing. This general interest quickly expanded to include water rights and the Sagebrush Rebellion. She now lives in southern Nevada where she teaches history at the community college level.

MAUREEN BRADY

Susan Imswiler: Tell me a little bit about your family background: your parents' names, where they came from.

Maureen Brady: OK. My mother and father both come from Ireland, and they both come from County Mayo—the poorest, although the largest county in Ireland. And they have more of the history of Ireland just if you could talk to them. It's impossible now, unless there's new miracle. Who knows? They've been deceased for about ten or fifteen years. But my mother and father were instrumental in us ranching, first of all because they had a few dollars and helped us buy our first cow. This was on Sullivan Lane in Sparks. Anyway, they were brought up on farms in Ireland, and they were very staunch religious people, very Christian. They were Catholic, but in spite of that, they were very Christian, which is something that I have found many times: being very Catholic makes you sometimes non-Christian. Unless you're part of the group, you don't know what I mean. It's amazing to me some of the religions that profess Christianity that don't practice Christian acts. They had many old world techniques for both human and animal medicine. And one of the things that I still remember, and my children, whom they adored and who was their pet plaything as they were growing up, was to get your tea or coffee in bed, and when you were sick, you were treated like a king or a queen. My father, till the day he died, got his tea in bed every morning with his breakfast, and that was almost like being treated as a royal person. And they were royal. They were innately regal, they had such great and wonderful ways. They really had honesty and integrity built into their psyches, and there wasn't a lie in them. Lying was a terrible sin; it was worse than the sin of sex, which you didn't even say that word, "s-e-x." That was a terrible word then.

Yes. [laughter]

But my mother and father were instrumental in helping us get ahead when we started out on the ranch. We didn't have enough money to buy our first cow—a milk cow—but they helped us out. They gave us the few dollars they had saved, and we bought a beautiful brown Swiss cow. Everybody wanted to milk her, and she was that gentle. And you could see us almost lining up to get a pull at the udder. It was *udderly* ridiculous.

[laughter]

But it was good. They knew how to handle animals; they knew how to feed them. They knew how to take care of my children, because I had to work to help bring in the feed to help make the bacon—you know, bringing home the bacon. Well, and we used to buy almost all our feed from a store that was on B Street, long gone, Sparks Feed and Supply. That was a great store. And if it wasn't for the fact that we had, I guess, good credit, we could never have fed the animals. And we fed them extra well.

For some reason or other, both my husband, who was an orphan, and my mother and father, who grew up at the tail end of the famine or who had family that was lost to the famine in Ireland, food was a very important item in their lives. And so there was never a stranger come to the door that didn't get invited to sit down and eat. I remember as a kid, I was on my way home from school on a Monday, and we had had lemon meringue pie, and my mother was a champion lemon meringue pie baker. And the meringue must have been two inches high, and that tart lemon flavor. My mouth was watering, because I knew that was the first thing I was going to do before I changed my uniform. And I had almost water coming out of my lips from the desire for that piece of lemon pie that was left over from Sunday dinner. And there was enough for two or three slices—generous slices, I might add. Well, when I got into the house, I opened the door, and there sitting at the kitchen table were two strange, scruffy-looking men. And guess what they were eating.

Oh, no! [laughter]

The lemon meringue pie. And there wasn't but the smallest piece left in the pie dish. And one of them finished the piece that he had had on his plate, and my mother offered him, "Would you like another piece?" And, of course, he said, "Yes." And there went my taste. And I'm telling you, I almost cried. I was just that emotionally involved with this lemon meringue pie. And the two strangers, before they left, my mother made a number of sandwiches for them from the roast that we had had on Sunday—there was always a roast on Sunday—and sent the two or three sandwiches each with them. And I acted like a nerd. And there was no such word in those days, but I acted like one then. I almost cried. I wanted to kick the bed and the dog and everybody, and my mother asked me, "What was wrong?" And she knew, of course, but she wanted to hear me say it.

I said, "You gave that pie away!"

And she said, "Yes." And she sat me down, and God, they could charm the birds out of the trees with their way of speaking. She said, "You never know," she says, "when somebody's at your door that has no food or no clothes that it might be Christ in disguise." She says, "Why would you ever, ever begrudge the poor man that has no food, no bed, no clothes?" And by the time she got done talking to me, I'm in tears because I was such a rat and they are so poor and we are so rich. And we were far from rich, but we had certainly a lot more than they did. But I never forgot that. And to this day, I still remember that incident, my taste of that lemon pie. Honestly, I can taste it now talking to you. It's awful. She was a great pie maker.

You grew up as a child on a dairy farm in Massachusetts, right?

Yes. And we had five thousand chickens, laying hens. Five thousand of those squeaky little white things, and we had two dogs. They were both the same breed as Lassie. What is she?

Oh, a collie?

Collies. We had mother and son, Princey and Lottie, and those dogs almost could talk. We could send them down to the pasture to bring in the milking cows or the ones that had dropped a calf that were fresh. They call it fresh when they come in for milking after they drop a calf. And those dogs would leave the dry cows down there, take in the milking cows and any that dropped a calf. And when we saw the cow come in that was supposed to have had a calf, we knew there was a calf in the field because she'd cover her calf up with grass or brush or something, and we'd have to go down and pick up the calf and bring it in. You know, there's such a renewal in ranching and farming. Each spring there's a rejoicing with the earth when you see all new life coming into the world. It's a very natural, healthy outlook, because death isn't the final straw. There was always something to remind you of how great this world really is, and I guess it's a healthy way for young men to grow up, is to see that. They're more interested in the result of their act than in the act itself of breeding. I hope so, anyway. But it seems that was the way it worked for us.

I remember one time we had a bull brought in by—oh, I can't remember his name. He was one of the well-known ranchers. Anyway, I remember I made fresh coffee and a fresh coffee cake for the men that were bringing in the bull, a beautiful bull that we bought from them. And when the truck moved through the gate into the corral, I was out there, and my oldest son was about five years old. And he was standing at the gate, and he was waiting to see the bull, because he had a heifer that had been given to him by his mother and father, me and his dad. And she was in heat, and down slides this bull. I've never seen a truck like that before. And it was a tilt-bed stock truck, and down slides the bull on his buttocks and dumps out on the ground. And the first thing he did, of course, was jump up and state sniffing the air for any females, and certainly he ran over to Jimmy's heifer—Sweetheart was her name; I never forget that.

Anyway, he did mount her and did breed her, and I wanted to take the kid in the house so he wouldn't be seeing these *vulgar* things, you know. And he says, "No, no, no, no!" He says, "I want to see her getting her . . ." Well, I don't know what he said, breeding or whatever. But the last report he gave to me before I shooed him in the house because I told him I had made a certain cake that he liked. I got him away from the gate. You could see everything. The gate was just slats. He says, "I can hardly wait to see the calf."

And I thought, "Oh, you vulgar mother. You're here worrying about the act of the cow and the calf—I mean the bull and the calf—and he's way ahead of you. He's thinking of the result of that act. □ And I never forgot that. It was something that was a lesson for me rather than a lesson for the child. At any rate, he went on to show 4-H animals and grow up to be a father himself. Anyway.

Now, you raised three children of your own and then took in four other boys.

Right.

And your children were James, Maureen, and Wayne.

Yes.

And then you adopted . . .

Roderick.

Roderick Cirone?

Yes.

And then the three brothers . . .

Were James, Thomas, and William Cistone. And their father had died; he had a brain tumor. He was a banker in, I think, Cleveland, Ohio, if I remember correctly. And they were awfully nice youngsters. I was blessed with awfully good kids. I remember going to mass on Sunday, and I'd go to early mass, because I'd have the day free then to do what I wanted. And, of course, the boys were up early, because they had to help milk the cows. And we'd trot into the little Catholic Church in Sparks, and in I go and all these kids after me, plus my own, you know. And all the old ladies that used to go to mass, they all peeked out from under their kerchiefs and looked at me as if I was, as they say, a *putana*. You know what a *putana* is?

Yes.

Well, here I was with all these kids, and I was in my twenties then. So I established a reputation, [laughter] I think, early in life that I didn't deserve. But they came to mass with me, and they were good. And when we got home, we were starved. We ate like trenchermen, no doubt about it. And we had all kinds of good food. If nothing else, we ate well, as any fool can plainly see. And there was always somebody that was at the table who was not part of the household. We fed tons and tons of people. But it was as natural as pouring a glass of water for someone to set another place at the table and put on an extra potato.

I remember one Thanksgiving we raised turkeys. My dad raised an awful lot, and were they good. My God, I haven't had a decent bit of turkey since. But we had invited my brother and his family, which was four children, and husband and wife, and our group, which was nine. That's fifteen, right? Couple of more. And we had about twenty invited that we had planned on. And as the day wore on . . . It was early in the morning when I started making potatoes, and I had a great big pot, and people kept coming in the door, and I kept throwing potatoes in the pot because I had enough in the turkey. The turkey was about thirty pounds, and there wasn't enough of it. But I ended up feeding thirty-seven people for Thanksgiving.

Wow.

That was an unexpected treat, I guess, but we did very well indeed. We had more than enough, and everybody went around burping with a smile. And there's a joy in the conversation at a table when there's a lot of camaraderie and good feelings toward each other.

The boys were always enthusiastic eaters; I must say that. But they deserved it. They were up early and out in the barn milking with my dad and my husband and feeding the chickens, the turkeys, the

ducks, the geese. And those rotten geese, I always wanted to kick them in the beak, because they were always hissing. Did you know that geese have little hooks on their inside of their wings that they can hit you with?

I know they can be mean.

Oh, these were terrible! And I swore I wouldn't have them again because one day a turkey went after Maureen, my daughter, when she was just a young girl, a baby, maybe a year and a half old. And I had her in a stroller outside, and a big old tom turkey we kept with a couple of hens to set some eggs for us for the following year was around. It was after, I believe, Thanksgiving. And this was down the canyon on the ranches down there. He went after her, and he jumped on her. And let me tell you, if you don't think the gorge rose in my throat. I could have killed that turkey by myself single-handed. I ran in and got one of the men that was around there. I said, "Kill that bird. I want that bird." And sure enough, we had him for supper.

[laughter] You met your husband, Joseph Cirone in Los Angeles at the Pan-Pacific rodeo, right?

Correct.

Tell me a little about that.

Well, I had gone to the rodeo with a friend of mine, Rita Melini. Matter of fact, she was my roommate while I was going to work and school in Los Angeles. My family was still in the East—my mother and father, anyway. And I had met one of the schoolmates that I had as a young kid on the train in New York. I kept looking down—you just don't, you know, stare at people when you're in that kind of atmosphere. And I was staring down at the floor of the train, and here was a pair of high-heeled boots, which I had no exposure to. So I didn't know them as cowboy boots. I thought, "What kind of crazy woman would be wearing high-heels and pants?" You know, you didn't do that. Today anything goes. But finally, I looked up to see what kind of a crazy woman would be wearing high-heeled shoes with pants, with trousers, you know. Well, when I looked up, I saw it was—gee, I can't even remember his name now. Here was a boy that I had gone to school with that was a buddy of my brother's and had been in and out of the house. They had moved to upstate New York, his family, on a dude ranch, and I guess there are a lot of them up there. He learned a lot about horses and cattle and ended up being a contestant in the rodeos. And he was on his way to pick up an award that he had won the night before at Madison Square Garden. Well, [to] make a long story short, he was with the same group that was in the Pan-Pacific rodeo.

So when I saw who it was, I thought, "Well, come on, we'll see if I can find him." I can't think of his name; forgive me. So here I am thinking, "What a dumb dame this is with high-heels and pants." Today they are very stylish, but then it was just pure ignorance that would allow a woman to wear her heels with slacks, as they called them. But anyway, when I saw who was producing the show, I said, "I'll go find out where so-and-so is."

So, Rita says, "OK, I'll wait here for you," and so she did. I went out to find if I could see him. And I didn't, but I saw this one man standing there, and he had an air, but he wasn't at all trying to put the make on the girls or anything. And I thought, "Well, that's a safe bet. I can ask him," and I did.

And he told me, he says, “I’m sorry, I don’t know, but I have somebody that is with the rodeo, and I’ll ask them. You tell me where you’re sitting. I’ll send him over.”

I says, “Thanks.” There was so much going on in that rodeo; that was a really a full-time rodeo. It really was an example for the rest of the rodeos since. I think it was Gene Autry that had produced it or one of the movie stars, but it was a hell of a rodeo. And it had two performances a day, three on Saturday and Sunday, and it lasted for twenty-some-odd days. So it was a big show. I came out because I was learning to smoke, you know. In college everybody smoked, and I didn’t. I don’t know why. But here I was, I’m going to have a cigarette. I stepped out on the balcony they had for where we were sitting, and all of a sudden, I heard, “There she is.” And I looked down. Here was this man that had the scar on his lip and this kid that was with him, so I thought. Well, that kid turned out to be twenty-nine-year-old Joe Cirone, who had been in the war and come back and started rodeoing. And I talked to him and told him who I knew. He had heard of him. He knew who or what he was. He used to ride saddle broncs. And he wasn’t with the show, and they didn’t know where he was or with whom he was affiliated with anymore. At any rate, that was the beginning of a *great* romance. I remember how dumb I was. He took Rita and I in to have a bite to eat after the show, not that night, but another night. Because I didn’t go out with anyone. You know, I had a chaperon. It was the way you were brought up then.

So we went into a cafe, and I remember Joe Cirone ordering chili beans con queso, with cheese. And I thought, “My gosh, he’s an international linguist, and a gourmet, too,” because there’s no hick like a New York hick, believe me. To this day, I see and hear people who come and throw their chest out bragging they’re from New York City, New York City, New York City. And New York City has turned into a hellhole. At least when I was a young girl living there, it was a rather gentle town, a big town, and it was well-run, and people were different. There wasn’t the same kind of terrible things going on that are going on today. And here I thought he was an international gourmet because he ordered chili beans. I had never eaten them. So I said, “Well, I’ll have the same thing.” Well, it was a different taste than I was used to, but it was tasty, and I enjoyed it. And well, Rita was a little smarter than I. She had heard of the chili beans and the Mexican food that I didn’t. I think the most that I ever had was Chinese food and pizza.

And they tell the story about this fellow from upstate who came down to New York City and was walking through town. He says to his friend with him—oh, he was kind of a simpleton, too, like me—and he says, “My gosh!” he says, “that guy Pizzeria, he really must be wealthy! Look at all the places that he has.”

So anyway, that’s how I met Joe Cirone, and Joe Cirone immediately staked a claim and came a-courting and a-courting and a-courting and a-courting. And I remember watching—they have what they call a grand entry in this show in which they had fluorescent shirts on the contestants, and they all had to ride in it. And Pan-Pacific is a pretty big place, and I remember sitting with Rita, and I remember when Joe Cirone went by, he waved his hand so I could see him. I followed that fluorescence all during this intricate serpentine that they had to go through. By God, when the lights went on, I was right on target.

So it must have been a mutual thing. He was a young boy; he was twenty-nine years old at that time—nine years older than me. And I was amazed. Anyway, that’s it. We courted for over a year and finally got married, and that was the beginning of an empire.

Did he stay in rodeoing for a while?

He used to ride bulls, and they are the worst animals to contend with in rodeo, because once they dump you they’ll turn on you if they can do it. And it was just too traumatic for me. I couldn’t stand

seeing that bull with his head down snorting and blowing snot all over him and then pawing with his hooves on his groin and chest and legs. It's a rough sport, and I don't know if it is a sport. But that's the way these people think, and I won't say anything. I'm a city slicker, as you know, almost.

How did you come to settle in Reno?

This is where he was from. He'd brought me home to his hometown. And when I started having a baby, the whole United States Army couldn't keep my mother from being with her daughter. So they sold their furniture, and they hightailed it out to Reno. And my dad went to work for the university the second day he was out here. And my mother helped me. We had the smallest little cabin you ever did see up on Highland Avenue near the university. And you held the door to the bathroom closed with your knees, that's how small it was. [laughter]

But I want you to know that on that Fourth of July, I still think of the Fourth of July rodeo as rodeo time, the Fourth of July. I had seven cowboys sleeping on the ground all around this little cabin, and I was feeding them. I had a wood stove in this little house, and I had a big mark across my belly where my belly would rub up against the stove cooking for them, and I was happy to do so. Of course, we would be absolutely ashamed if we had to pay to get into a rodeo. That didn't seem right. But that Fourth of July rodeo was always a great show, and the townspeople of Reno, and the second-class citizens from Sparks. We tolerated them in Reno.

This was just south of the Wilbur May ranch, right, and north of Peavine School? The cabin on Highland?

Right.

What kind of amenities did you have? You had one room and . . .

One room.

That was it, right?

Yes, the corner of it was closed in with firewood and used as the commode. And I remember we had—the stupid things you do when you're young and you know everything, and you have no money, but you make do with what you have. We had a single bed with a three-quarter-sized mattress on it. And after I had fallen out of the bed a couple of times carrying—I was now seven months along with my first baby, and I had a big belly, I want you to know. And trying to turn over in the bed at night was treacherous, because if I hit a certain portion of that mattress that was sticking out over open space, bam! Down I'd go. Well, then I moved to the inside and was closer to the wall. And then I got claustrophobia; I was climbing the wall. Isn't that terrible to think of those things now?

You typically had a lot of the cowboys around, the rodeo cowboys?

Yes.

What were they like?

Well, I always found them polite, talented. There were one or two that had pretty caustic mouths. They really could curse, but with royalty, I want you to know, that so-and-so horse or . . . And it was never directed at people; it was always directed at situations or at animals that they had been unable to ride or they had lost money on. But all in all, I found out then that they were poets, that the cowboys were poets, and they were good ones, too. I used to sit and listen to them, and they all sat down on their hunkers, squatting, which reminds me of the time that Levi Frazier—did you know him or of him?

No. No.

Levi Frazier was a Paiute Indian from the reservation out at Nixon, and Joe used to deal with him on some kind of horses. He used to do quite a bit of training, too, and he used to bring his family in, and I met them. And I remember the first time my mother was in the house helping me—I had the children then—and Levi was in the kitchen. And he sat down against the wall squatting and talking away with Joe about whatever. Who knew what he was talking about? And my mother excused herself and came through the kitchen to go into the dining room, and when she got into the dining room, she turned around and looked at me. I saw her eyes were as big as silver dollars, you know. She just was astounded, I could see that. And I didn't know—I thought maybe somebody said something to her. But they didn't. She was just surprised. And Levi was dark; he had dark complexion. When his wife and the children and he left, my mother came to me and said, "Oh, my God," she says, "I didn't know the Indians could speak English." She didn't think that they could speak the American language. And here she was with an Irish brogue, you know. [laughter] I said, "Yes, Mother, they do."

But they were very nice people. And they used to come by. I used to get a lot of extra clothes from Catholic welfare that I used to leave in the boxes, and that was donated there. And I'd give some to the Fraziers [to] take out to Nixon, and they were appreciative.

You had said before that you saw a lot of similarities between the cowboys and the Irish in their temperament.

Oh, indeed. First of all, I think the Irish men, to this day, are all poets. They used to call it the land of kings and scholars and poets, and there is no doubt in my mind that the Irish, at least in my family over there, were poetic in both the composition of poetry and in the recital of poetry. My dad, when he was eighty-some-odd years of age, could recite poems and songs with fifteen and sixteen stanzas and have every word. And he was kind of a pet to the Irish group in Reno.

Well, I found the same thing is true with the American cowboy that used to be, anyway. I don't know. There's a whole new generation that's in cowboyland and rodeoland today. But I went to the cowboy poetry gathering up in Elko, and it brought back many memories to me when I heard the poetry that they recited. And it was interesting to watch the people who were watching these poets recite their own poetry up there. It isn't cheap, but it's worth it, I must tell you.

Now, you had said at one point that you'd sort of felt that the cowboys at that time were something of prima donnas?

They were. I think they still are, but that's a personal opinion. But they really didn't want to work, half of them. They didn't want to take an honest day's job. They would rather rodeo and starve than take an honest job and eat well. And there was always a handout to be given to them by either the people who were in the rodeo with them or people they met on the side who were always attracted to rodeo people. And so, there were an awful lot of them, and they were prima donnas in that for six or eight seconds of applause that they got in their ride, that would do them till the next day, and that's all they wanted. They didn't want to work, they didn't want to do anything—not all of them now, don't misunderstand me, but quite a few of them. They were lazy bums, some of them. [laughter] The truth.

Do you know what the rodeo circuit was like at the time? Did you follow it for very long? It doesn't sound like you followed it very long after you were married.

No, I don't. I couldn't comment on that.

Do you have any comments about how the rodeo side differs from the ranching side?

Oh my gosh, yes! Oh, yes, I should say! The ranching side was down-to-earth hard work, up early, to bed early, and you worked all day long to either put up hay or work cattle. But the rodeo, you didn't get up until noon, because you were probably hung over from a celebration the night before. There was never a time where there wasn't some kind of party going on. I remember going to a party with Joe Cirone, and he was part of this group of rodeo cowboys, and they had gone to see—I can't remember her name; she was a famous trick rider. And she was having a party for the rodeo people. And my God, they ate and drank and drank and ate and danced and ate and drank, and that was it, and that's all they did. And they couldn't have gotten up before noon and staggered to the horse trough, put their head in the water to clear their brain. But it was an absolutely different type of life. And if you made a good ride, you were a hero, and if you didn't, too bad, it was bad luck. You didn't get much attention, I must say that. So, God help them.

Now, the first place you lived in Reno was the Greel Ranch?

The Greel Ranch out in Washoe Valley. Right. Jimmy Greel. He was a photographer for the state highway department and produced all the pictures for the Nevada State Highway magazine. Joe had worked for the Greels before he went into the service.

And when he came out, he wanted to be a photographer of sorts, and he did. He went to school, in case anything would ever happen, because the ranch work and rodeo work had a lot of injuries to it, as you know, physical injuries. And if anything would ever happen, he wanted to fall back on something he could do, which was, I thought, a well thought-out plan. And he studied photography and became quite good at it, to tell you the truth. However, he was not a businessman, but he was a good photographer.

I was always so impressed by Emily Greel, the wife of Jim Greel. She went to school in Paris at the Sorbonne. And the first time I saw her, I was so impressed then to hear this very definite New England accent come out of her mouth. Why she sounded like she was Julia Child. She sounded like an exaggerated Julia Child when she spoke, and she had two lovely kids, one of whom I believe writes for the paper now. That was Mary—"Muffy," they called her—Mary Greel and Jim Jr.—"Dumbo," they called him, and I guess you know why they called him Dumbo.

[laughter] Oh, no.

But they were late-in-life children, and they were loved and adored by their parents. And they were nice kids, too, very nice.

How did you happen to settle on the ranch at Sullivan and Greenbrae?

Well, we were living in that little cabin, I told you, where I had taken swan dives out of the bed over a three-quarter mattress on a single bed. And we now had a baby, and it was impossible. Just the physical presence of two adults and a baby, and then if my mother or father came in—my father was working up at the university now, and my mother was trying to help me—it became almost intolerable to have that many people in that small a place. I guess it's like living in a mobile home today. I'm not sure, but I'm just guessing.

So, we had I guess what they call networking. We had put out the word that we were looking for a place of our own, a place that would accommodate the Cirones and the Bradys. And friends of Joe's told him about this place on Sullivan Lane that was available for rent, provided you passed the scrutiny of the owners who lived there, Chris and Christina Nielson. They had come down from Humboldt County in California where they were dairymen. They really were hard-working people. Chris was a little guy, and Christina was a full-blown woman. And it was amazing how well they got along. Anyway, they were living there in one of the small houses.

There were two small houses and one big house on the ranch, and it was a forty acre parcel. And it went down to what is now Rock Boulevard from Sullivan Lane. I was trying to remember Rock Boulevard the other day. Anyway, we went in, and they interviewed us and then wanted to know all about us. And it was a little traumatic, because you felt like you were under a microscope. They were looking at your clothes and at your hands and at your work history and who and what. And I think the fact that my mother and father were living with us was an asset, because they felt that—I don't know what they felt, but I just got that feeling that having your parents there—they were now in their late sixties, early seventies, and a little bit lonesome for a family. They had raised two girls, and one had been married to the owner of that ranch that used to raise cows and pigs. Bud Davis was his name. And I don't know whether it was a settlement in the divorce between them or whatever, but there was a connection there to the Nielsons, Chris and Christina Nielson. They were nice people; they were good people; they were hard-working people.

Bud Davis had kind of an interesting history.

Well, he was a flamboyant type. There's a story that goes around—and probably somebody else could tell you better than I—that he used to really work his wives. And I say "wives," plural, not at the same time, but he used to go collect garbage to feed to the pigs. He was a hard-working man himself, but those wives better shape up, or they were down the road. Anyway, he had a wife and her mother living there, and the mother was taking care of the house and cooking, and the daughter was helping on the feeding the hogs and helping milk the cows, et cetera, et cetera. And one day, I don't know if there were words between them—this is the story; it's not my story. I'm repeating what was told to me—he'd come in from the barn and started looking for his wife, and he was in bad humor. And she had taken off and

gone downtown and started playing the slot machines or something. And that was the end of that—he divorced her or she divorced him. But guess what happened. He was so intrigued with the wife’s mother that he ended up marrying his mother-in-law. I don’t know if that complicated any other relationships in the marriage, but that was the story. He’d come in and found a better working partner, I guess. I don’t know. But you’d have to work if you lived on a farm or a ranch. There’s no way of living without doing hard work.

Did you say you had a lease option from the Nielsons?

Yes.

So, you eventually did buy.

We exercised the option to buy, right.

This was around 1950?

Yes.

You had said at one point that after World War II people were not eager to go into farming or ranching.

That’s right.

Why?

Hard work. Hard work. Too many things were being invented and coming along. All the gadgets that we take for granted today had not been established yet, but there was talk of them and such. And I remember being part of a group called the Glendale Historical Society. The Glendale School, you know?

Yes.

I was president of that group eventually. All these women—and they were grand women, hard-working good women, that had to cook and clean and sew. As a matter of fact, there was a gal in there by the name of Mary Ellen whose father you had written up, and her name was Callaghan before she was married. And she impressed me so much when she showed me how instead of paying twelve hundred dollars to a dentist to straighten the teeth of her son—a handsome boy; he’s handsome—she took some nylon filaments from the fishing line and put it on her son’s teeth and did a hell of a job. That’s the type of people that you run into.

Then the others were—they made the best sausage, the best Italian sausage—not too spicy, not too salty, not too hot. It was just grand, wonderful, and they made that like you would make a hot cake batter. And they could sew. You showed them something, and they could make it, honestly, because they had to. They didn’t get into town to shop. And that’s when Sears and Penney’s and a couple of other large stores were on Sierra Street. Everybody went in there. I remember we used to go into town on Saturday and park on Commercial Row and start out going into Cannan’s to get the drugs. They had the drugs for

the animals, and we'd start there at Cannan's Drugs and walk down to Sierra Street past a number of places. And I'll bet you we met twenty-five people we knew. They'd do the same thing that we were doing, shopping. And there was a Rauhut's bakery there and a Japanese fish store. It was a kind of a gathering of the clans of farmers on Saturday morning. And it was a much more easy time. The pressure wasn't on you. That's the time when the Indians used to sit on the ledge of the bank on Second and Virginia, and they used to have themselves wrapped in a blanket. And how they got up there, maybe their husbands helped them, because it was quite a little jaunt up from the ground. But they'd sit there, and the sun would beat down. It was a pleasant area, and then it was all over when the bank put up brass—I don't know what you'd call them, but they prevented them from sitting on there unless they want diamond-shaped dimples in their derriere from the bank. But they didn't sit there anymore.

People were different then. It was a much nicer place. I remember one time I was waiting for Joe Cirone. He worked for Parker's. You know where Parker's was?

Yes.

He worked for the Parkers on weekends for a couple of weeks during busy season and made some extra cash. I'd come down to pick him up. We had one vehicle in those days and were damn glad to have it, to tell you the truth. It was a pickup. And so I was in town. It was a Saturday. I had done all my shopping and had put the stuff into the pickup and locked it and left it sitting out there on Center Street right almost in front of Parker's. And so I left word, told him I was going to go to a movie. And we had a number of movies then from the Tower Theater where they had those lovely big seats on the ends of the aisle. You remember those?

No.

The Crest Theater and the—oh, well, I don't have to remind you of all the good movies showed. But there was also the Reno Theater, which you may not have heard of. It was on Center Street in the middle of the block down from the bus station. So I paid, I think it was thirty-five cents, a real big amount to pay, I guess, but it wasn't very expensive. And I went in there and sat down. I bought some peanuts or something and sat down, started eating. And after a while I became aware that every time—it was Western pictures that were being shown—every time the Indians made a move on the screen to go after the cowboys, there was an eruption of, "Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!"

The cowboys, I thought, were—they are confused. And it turned out that it was where all the Indians went. And they used to bring a pint of liquor in their boot, they tell me, and I sat there in total ignorance. But I came out of it, and it was different, because it was like the soundtrack was off. Every time the cowboys made moves there was nothing or, "Boo!" Somebody would say, "Boo." Wasn't as spontaneous as the "hooray" for the Indians. It was a different time.

I was going to ask you about the other ranch. You said you had a place down in Yerington at one point.

Yes, I never ranched down there. I knew we bought that as an investment, and it so happened that Roderick, the oldest boy, got married. He married one of the Gaspari girls. Milo, as a matter of fact, step-father to this girl who still lives down there. And we had ranches down the canyon. And we were neighbors to the Peris. Have you heard of the Peris?

Yes.

They were an education, I must say. They were unique, I must say—hard-working, good farmers, but I can't say any more than that. They really were hard to get along with. I remember—if I tell you a story, is it all right?

Sure.

My mother and father used to take care of my oldest boy, Jimmy, who went to the parochial school, and he stayed in town with them during the week. And we had the house rented out, and we had the ranch—the Ascarate Ranch, which was the furthest eastern ranch on the river—and I forget the name of the ranch that we lived on. Anyway, they were hard to live with, I must say. And my mother and father, God rest their souls, are going to be madder than hell. I don't blame them. I was driving down the road, which was very rough and rocky. I had the two children with me. One was in school, and the other two were there. I had big baskets of food for the men that were working on the lower ranch, on the Ascarate place. We were getting ready to put up hay or something, and I had to feed them, which was all right. Well, I was driving down this terrible road that was just for the service of the two ranches, and the Peri's was in the middle between the two ranches. We had leased them from A.J. Flagg, who had purchased them. We had a bunch of men working down there on the lower ranch cleaning ditches and doing all of the maintenance work that had been neglected for a long time, and takes a lot of work. I had to go down to the lower ranch with a big lunch for these men, hard-working men, and as I was going down, you couldn't drive fast on this road; it was potholes, and it was awful. It was a rough, rough road. And sure enough, I passed the Peri's place, and they were great farmers, no question about it! Their rows were as straight as a die, and they were just good farmers.

I looked down, and there was—I couldn't tell from the distance whether it was Joe or Jim—they were twins. And the one, he was standing on the seat of the tractor that was in the middle of the field and holding onto the steering wheel of the tractor. I didn't know then why he was up on the tractor seat standing with his feet on the seat instead of sitting, but I subsequently found out that he was looking at a big rattlesnake that was in the furl. And that area is loaded with snakes, just loaded with snakes.

This is down on the river east of Sparks?

Right. It wasn't too long after that that they stopped by the house, and my mother and father were there, and I introduced them to my mother and father. And they had never met Irish people, and of course, because they spoke with their slight brogue—at least, to me it was slight—the Peris were intrigued. They wanted to talk to them. Somehow, it came out that there are no snakes in Ireland, and the Peris were intrigued with that. And, of course, down the canyon, that was a hotbed of snakes. As a matter of fact, I had killed a couple of baby rattlers that were on the front lawn that came in on the front lawn when I had the children there. It was a dangerous place, now that I think of it, because I was dumb. So when they heard that, the two Peri brothers were absolutely, totally intrigued, and they wanted to talk more and more and more and more. I had a streak of meanness in me, and so somehow or other, later, speaking to them, they said to me—they were nosy. [laughter] They wanted to know what was going on around them. And they said to me, “Is that true what your mother and father said about the snakes in Ireland?”

I said, "Oh, yes." And I said, "My mother has a special prayer that she says," and I said, "She can banish the snakes off the ranch," because it was just a mean thing.

And they said, "Really?!"

"Really," I said. And son-of-a-gun, don't you know, they were after me ever after that to tell them this. "No," I said, "I can't do that. It's a special thing." And they swore that all the snakes that they had on their ranch were driven over there by my mother. And they wanted to find out that prayer.

I said, "It's in Gaelic. You couldn't possibly understand it or say it."

"We'll learn. We'll learn."

"No, no, no, no, no." But they were forever coming in and borrowing—notice that word—tools out of our barn and out of our shed and such, and it was an annoyance, no question about it.

Did you have any other ranches then? You had the ones out east of Sparks, and you had one down in Yerington. Was there any other?

That was enough, believe me.

[laughter] I'm sure it was. Now, the place on Sullivan was a dairy farm but you also raised thoroughbreds there.

Yes.

For the race track?

Not far from the race track. We could ride over very easily either from Wedekind Road that ended up at Sutro Street there. As a matter of fact, I took two of my girlfriends after we were married to ride in the Reno rodeo parade.

Then you also, at least one winter, boarded Harry Callahan's cattle for him?

Right.

There was an interesting trade there?

Right, right, right. They were behemoth, they were huge, they were beautifully gentle, lovely cows. Their udders were intriguing. They were just lovely giants of cows, and they were as gentle as lambs, except if they stood on your foot in error, you felt it immediately. And the boys always loved having them there. Harry and his young son, Harry Jr., brought them down. I think that was the winter that they had to feed, and they flew hay into Elko. Do you remember that time?

I've read about that, yes.

Yes. There was a terrible, terrible . . . there was snow on the ground for so long, and that's what happened to Harry. He had no more hay to feed, and I must say for Joe Cirone, he was always generous with food for the animals. They really, really were well-fed. At any rate, he brought down these lovely big

cows, and they'd fill the door when they'd go through the doors. Their sides really touched the sides of the door jambs, and you stood by them, and you felt rather puny, I must say.

Were these Durhams?

Yes. Yes. Milking short-horn.

You also, at the same time, had pigs on that farm?

Oh, yes. We had a little bit of everything. We had turkeys, geese, pigs, horses, cows. We even had a few sheep and those rotten geese that used to chase the kids.

You had kind of an interesting source of feed at one point. You were getting potatoes and surplus that they had?

Yes, this was during the time there was a subsidy for potato farmers, and I remember the Oppios, they had to dye those potatoes. They had to dip them in some kind of a green vegetable dye to show that they were subsidized potatoes. And we could buy them for two dollars a sack or even less than that. I can't remember the exact amount.

You had said three dollars a ton at one point.

Oh, that's probably it, because it was such a reasonable amount, you'd be insane if you didn't buy it because the source of the food. Then we used to boil those potatoes up with molasses and sprinkle a little barley on there, and it was a potent feed for all the animals, really and truly, including cows. They loved that sweet molasses. And the pigs just grew fatter than hogs. But that three dollars a ton, I believe you're right. My head was working better then. You got these potatoes, and if you went through them, there were always a lot of them that didn't have that green marking. Didn't go through the flesh of the potatoes; went on the skin. And I assure you, I found enough to make a few meals out of.

My mother and father said, "Oh, glory be to God. Here they feed it to the pigs and give it away. In Ireland, they'd make meals out of it." And it was true, they would. But times change, don't they?

Did you have a hay derrick on one of those places?

On the Sullivan Lane property.

What ever happened to that?

They tore it down and cut it up for firewood.

Oh, no! And the one at Ghiggeri's came from, you think, the state hospital in Sparks?

I do believe so, because that's where they used to put up hay there. They had the inmates that used to milk cows and farm and put up hay.

Tell me a little bit about what a hay derrick is and how that works.

Well, I never worked on a hay derrick. It was for loose hay, as I remember, for the grass hay that we had. It wasn't for the baled hay, which came along later. They used to reach onto the bed of the wagon, and lift up the loose hay and lift it up and swing it into an opening in the barn that we had where they used to store the loose hay, and then they could fork it down into the troughs for the animals to feed.

So, it was like a giant movable pulley system?

Exactly. You sound like you were a farm girl yourself.

No, I've just done some homework. [laughter] Now, you sold your milk to the Crescent Creamery, and they don't exist any longer, right?

They don't exist any longer. Well, we were kind of proud of the fact that we had the highest cream test [knocks on table for emphasis] of anyone that sold their milk and cream to the Crescent Creamers.

That's good.

Oh, well. I don't know. I don't think it was commercially smart, but we did have that neat status. As a matter of fact, I used to sell cream and eggs from the ranch right out the back door, and I used to have to leave a caveat with everyone that bought the cream. I used to have quart jars full of cream, and I'd have to warn them, "You must dilute this with milk, because it'll turn into butter like that." It was that heavy. After a day you could turn the jar upside-down, and nothing would come out. Nothing. It's just solid in there. And, oh God, was that good! We used [to] make hot cakes with that, and those hot cakes [laughter] almost rise out of the pan they were so light.

You got your water for the Sullivan Ranch out of the Orr Ditch? Is that right?

No, we got what's called the "people's drain ditch," and then we pumped water, which was a terribly expensive. We got a seven—I'm repeating now things that may have a wrong letter with it—7KVA transformer we had to buy to put up on the pole so that the Sierra Pacific would attach electricity to it, and we pumped out of our well.

What did you do when you had to change the water when you were irrigating? Tell me how that worked. You used a shovel to do that.

Oh, yes. You'd go down on the bank of the ditch to where you wanted the water to run into in the furrows. First of all, you'd have to stop irrigating the area in front of the portion you wanted to irrigate, because the water would . . . I'm trying to think, now that you mention it. Funny how you do things almost by habit and never think about it. You'd go down on the edge of the ditch, turn the water off to the

old and then open up the furrows so that when you turned the water from the ditch in there, that it would go along these furrows and yes, irrigate the ground.

How did you open up those furrows? It wasn't a matter of turning a crank or anything like that.

Oh, no, no, no, no. It was the old hoof and hand method. You pushed with your hoof on the shovel and lifted it up, and you left that with the sod, if it was any sod at all, right there on the bank, because you eventually would come back and have to close it up again. It was a repetition over and over and over.

So when you're talking about opening and closing, you're not talking about simply fighting the gate open, you're talking about digging out furrows to open, and then putting dirt back in to close.

Right, right.

Tremendous amount of work. In spite of the fact that you had forty acres on Sullivan, you were awfully close to civilization, maybe closer than you wanted to be at times.

At times, you're absolutely right. The town grew up around us. We moved in there. It was a suburban area to Reno-Sparks. And we found out in a short while that we just couldn't turn foals out with their mother—mares—into the pastures, because what is now Rock Boulevard was the end of our pasture, and they had started building houses in that area. One day when I went down to change the water for irrigating, I could see there was movement down in the lower pasture, and as I got closer, I could see that there were kids down there. And there were three—not one, not two, but three—kids on a yearling—a filly, I believe it was. And I thought, "Oh, my God in heaven, they'll be killed. She'll buck them off and then start jumping and kicking and lashing, just feeling good," you know. They can do that.

Those kids had no idea of what they were doing. How they got up there, I don't know. They must have pulled each other up, and it was I guess to the credit of the filly that she was gentle enough to be handled that way. We had gentle animals; that's one thing I have to say. When Joe's around, he always had . . . except for the thoroughbreds. They took a finished horseman to handle them. But I think any stud with mares in heat around them would take a finished horseman to handle them. Well, I got down there, and they looked up and saw me coming. I had a shovel in my hand, and I'm plotting how I'm going to take care of these—first, the kids, second, the animals, or who knows what I was thinking. But my heart was in my mouth, because I was sure that one of those children would be kicked in the head or they'd be dumped off and stepped on. It was a very rural atmosphere, but they had climbed through. We had hog wire four feet high and then two or three strands of barbed wire. They had climbed through that to get into that pasture. By the time I got down, they had looked up and seen me coming. And by golly, they just slid down the back end of that filly, and she just stood there and turned around and looked at them. They ran out through the fence, and I'm saying prayers to saints that haven't even been canonized yet to protect those children, because it's so easy.

Accidents happen like that on a farm, and you know that they can be very dangerous and very bloody and very crippling. I prayed to God to protect those kids and keep them safe. And the thing was, there were mares and other foals in that pasture, and if the kids started running, the mares and foals would start running too, you know. So, I'm thinking, "Oh, my God, and if I live through this day . . ." I'd have

offered up many a prayer for the souls in purgatory to protect those kids. I really was concerned about them. At any rate, that's when I found out—we called the insurance man immediately. I can't remember his name. He was pretty well known around here, and he carried the insurance on the houses and the barn, and he said, "There's nothing," he says, "I can tell you except get rid of the horses."

"What?!" says we.

He says, "You have what they call an attractive nuisance, and there's no way I can write a policy for you to insure you against anything, because you have that attractive nuisance." I never forgot that word, attractive nuisance, because the horses were attractive.

Then I said, "Well, I better rely on my prayers to the saints, to the Blessed Mother and God to help us out in our stupid activities."

What can you tell me about the link between the grade of dairy alfalfa and the milk production per animal?

Oh, well, anyone that's had an alfalfa operation, cutting and baling and doing all the things that hay requires, especially irrigating—water is very important to the production of hay—the more green leaf that's on the alfalfa, the better it is toward the production of milk in the cow. I remember when we had hay to sell—which was, we always had a little bit, not very much—but how many times the potential buyer would put their fingers into the bale of hay and pull out a little glob of green leaf and put it in their mouths and test it, because they felt that they could tell the quality of the hay by the flavor and taste. I believe they could, no question about that. They, of course, were generally dairy farmers, and the production of milk from hay is very important to them. It was to us, too, but I just remember, too, when—what was the president that we kicked out of office? Nixon—he opened trade to China even though he did some dumb things politically. He was a great guy. The first thing, and the thing that I remember, is that one of the first things that China asked for in this reciprocal trade agreement was that they wanted some of the hay from Lovelock, Nevada. Lovelock produced the highest protein hay in the world, so I understood.

I was very impressed with that, that Nevada hay was an instrument in the—excuse me, I'm hiccupping. I have to drink less gassy beer. [laughter] I was always impressed that Nevada had their name in the forefront of negotiating, and this was while it was still a communist country. I guess it still is today to some degree, or to all degrees. But our alfalfa hay that is produced in Lovelock is renowned on the West Coast for its high protein content. All the dairies in California—you'll see them in the summertime—they're sending truck and trailer loads of hay from Lovelock down to California.

We don't really appreciate quite what we have. We're kind of a dumb state in that way. We don't utilize all the good things that we have. Lovelock, at one time, was a real rip-snorting town; it isn't anymore. And Winnemucca has taken over as far as a social and commercial area, and that isn't too great. Now, I understand Elko has been in a recess because of the gold prices and the mine shutting down. I have lived, I should say, in the most unique historical age in the world. I remember talking to my mother and father. They saw the telephone come in, they saw the electric lights come in, they saw cars come in, they saw airplanes come in. It was almost like something out of a cartoon, a book of cartoons, all the things that they have lived through and how often they used to say to me, "Oh, you don't appreciate what you have: running water in the house. You didn't have to go out to the well with buckets or down to a creek with buckets." Imagine going to an outhouse in the summertime. It must have been awful, gagging from the non-pleasant odors emanating from a wooden shack over an open hole. And I would be

frightened to death. Those rotten snakes generally congregate in something like that, and I'm frightened to death of snakes.

God help the poor pioneer women! How did they ever exist? How did they ever come through when they had to do all the things we take for granted? Turn on a tap, and we can fill a pot full of water. They had to walk down to a creek or a well and draw water to do everything, from washing clothes to washing baby diapers. I'll bet their diapers weren't as clean as they would like you to believe. But they did it, and they did marvelous things. They used to make their own butter. All of these ranch women, I give them a great deal of credit. How the hell they took care of their own personal hygiene and their own personal needs. I often thought of the women coming across the country when they didn't have boxes of Kleenex for physical well-being and cleanliness. How in God's name did they do it? How did they take care of themselves? How did they take care of babies that are notorious for making messes in diapers and trying to clean them and keep them socially acceptable so if they handed the baby to someone, it wouldn't gag them, you know?

But they have to be given a great deal of credit. Those pioneer women, I would work to get recognition for them. They were tough, honorable women. I remember a friend of mine telling me her grandmother told the story of how the men were away from the ranch. There was a semi-quiet between the local Indians and themselves, but the Indians would get a few bottles of whiskey and go off on a tear and then go to see if they could find some women at home, because they had long hair in those days. And the Indian braves or the Indian men that were on the tear loved to get women's hair cut off because they had long, flowing locks. Well, she saw the Indians dismounting outside the gate that was leading into her little patch of farm produce, you know, that garden for the house. And with that, she knew that they were coming in, and there was a damn good chance that she might be if not beheaded, at least be-haired, you know. [laughter] So she thought, "Well, she had to take care of the children." She got some Mercurochrome or something. It was red, and she put dots all over her face and neck and arms. And the arms only came from the elbows down. But even in the hottest days in the summer, the women used to have long sleeves. They were very modestly dressed. The Indians came to the door, and she made physical signs to them to go away, and she was pointing to the face of the children. She had two children that were walking around, and she had painted them with spots, too. I don't know what disease it was that turned their face red with spots, but they knew it was contagious and she turned them away with that. They just took off, and she kept her hair.

We have it easy today, no doubt about it, and we don't appreciate it. I remember even till the day she died, my mother used to do her wash on a washboard, and in the bathtub. I couldn't believe it, but her laundry was cleaner than mine that I had with the washing machine and all the suds and all the various things. She was a very clean woman; those women had to be clean, I guess, because it was offensive if you didn't clean yourself.

What were you going to tell me about the Bit and Spur?

Oh. After we had sold the property on Sullivan Lane, the children's father, Joe Cirone, he said, "I'm not going to work for anyone else ever again." He had worked hard in his time—but then so did I, and so did a lot of others—and he wanted to get into a business that would support him. I think he read too many Arabian Nights tales, you know, where the Pashas could lean back on cushions, and the dancing girls would dance around. But anyway, we ended up buying. The reason we were intrigued with this is because the property went with it. Property became a valuable lesson to us. On South Virginia Street,

5560—I'll never forget the address—there was a property that had a small building for a living quarters and an office, plus a large area for cooking and drinking and dancing, and it was kind of neat. So we thought we'd plunge in and get going to an area that we never, never, never knew a damn thing about and did pretty well for a while, but we were so ignorant of the ways of the world. The employees that we had were a different type of people altogether. They were the bartenders and the cocktail waitresses. And hell, they used to go out of that Bit and Spur night after night with more money than we ever saw from it, but it was our own fault. You can't point a finger at anyone. We just didn't know quite how to handle it. In spite of that, we were rather successful. We had cars lined up and down South Virginia Street, and my God, the county sheriff's department, were they good to us. They were absolutely heroes in my book. They'd stop in, walk around, and the place would be jammed. I don't know what it was. There was a fatal attraction there for some reason. To this day—and that's twenty years later—I still have people saying, "When are you going to open the Bit and Spur again?"

It was well-received, and there was a good reputation for it. The one thing that I remember women telling me: they could go in there, sit down, have a drink, nobody would accost them. There were other women that wouldn't bother going in there because of that, you know.

But really, it was almost kind of like an old-fashioned hoedown type of atmosphere. But that was what we bought, and then we sold the property and the cows and such on Sullivan Lane. We had spread ourselves thin, there's no doubt about it, because it's hard to be working all night and then to stagger around the corral trying to feed cows and horses during the day, and that's what happened. But it was well-received, and I think anybody who's been around here awhile would remember the name.

There were all kinds of cowboys there, but I remember one thing for sure: there never was a fight, there was never any extreme behavior there. All I had to do is if one of the waitresses came up to me—and I realize now I was being used many times for things that they could do, but I was dumb, and I didn't know, and I was happy to do it—she'd say, "Table so-and-so, there will be a fight there."

I'd say, "Oh, really?"

And she'd say, "Yes, would you go over?" And I don't know what the heck she expected me to do if there was going to be a fight, if I was supposed to be poked in the nose. But not so. I'd walk over and hear these young men that were going to be cowboys or rodeo hands or whatever, and all I'd have to do was lean over the table, and I'd generally know them by name, and I'd say, "Hey, Butch," or "Hey, John, hey so-and-so," whatever their name was, "please shout in a low tone of voice." It stopped them for a minute, and they had to think. It didn't dawn on them this was absolutely incorrect English, but it worked.

I guess that it was a terrible, terrible, terrible drag on us. We brought western stars in and lost our shirts, I have to tell you. [laughter]

And now, here we are, two Washoe County hillbillies running a bar and a restaurant. And the food was good. It was so costly. We could see even in our ignorance our lack of expertise in dealing with the public on a one-to-one basis that the food portion of the restaurant was really carrying us down, because you had to have a chef, dishwasher, waitress, bus boy, to serve just one person. Whereas with the bartender, he could serve five or ten at the same time. But anyway, we decided to get out of the food business. We had good food; there really is no question about that. But it was an expensive experiment. By the time we got out of it, we knew what we were doing, and then we just were over-tired. We were tired, no question about it.

Who were your neighbors around Greenbrae and Sullivan?

On Sullivan Lane? We had a man by the name of Capurro lived across the street, Joe Capurro. He had two or three ranches out toward Pyramid Lake. They still do, I'm sure. He had two sons, two nice boys. And Joe Capurro was born in Gardnerville or Minden, I believe it was. He was brought up in this country, but he spoke with an Italian accent and like he had stepped off the boat the day before yesterday. He had a very gruff voice. Good rancher, good farmer. He was the kind of a neighbor that was remote. He had a nice brother, Pete, and his two sons, George and Herb. Herb used to take care of the dudes. They had the place out at Pyramid Lake, couple of ranches out there, and they used to take in some of the six-week divorcées. That's the time where you had to stay here six weeks.

They had a very lucrative income from both cattle and hay, and they had a cash flow from the divorcées. Subsequent to that they sold out just about the time we did, only they were smarter than we were. He sold to a group of investors out of California. He put in . . .

Subdivisions?

Not so much subdivision, but a commercial development. They had two or three big stores that come in there, and we were standing like hillbillies looking with our mouth open at the big changes that it made on Sullivan Lane. The other neighbors on Sullivan Lane were the two Teglia brothers. They had a nice family, and they were nice neighbors. Up north was the Oppios, and the Bebouts have the Green Thumb Landscaping. Petersons had a small egg farm right on the corner of Wedekind and Sullivan. It was an awfully nice, quiet neighborhood. And then the state came along and widened the road. It was a dirt road when we moved there, but it changed quickly.

Yes. Your parents were living with you most of the time that you had the ranch.

Yes.

What was the house like?

Well, the big house had three bedrooms and a bath upstairs with a small attic, and downstairs were one bedroom, another bath, kitchen, porch, pantry, dining room, living room, and I don't know what you call the room under the stairs, which was pretty big, which was, I say, a fitting room. We kept books in there all the time. It was a big house, and there was always plenty of room for people. A lot of people who were in trouble or hurt, it seemed that like the old tinkers used to do in Ireland, they put a mark on your door with chalk to give information to the rest of the traveling people that this is good for a meal or whatever it was. But we always had a lot of people staying with us.

And we were blessed in many ways. We were not the great entrepreneurs that we thought we were going to be—far from it. Finally, after the Bit and Spur, the master of the house, Joe Cirone, took some of the thoroughbred animals down to the track in California, trained and raced them down there, because there was no facility for him up here. That was when it was all over, I guess.

You had a barn on the property, right?

Oh, yes.

Where was that in relation to the house?

It was directly east of the house, directly east.

And then there were two other smaller buildings?

Two smaller houses. One I understand was used by Bud Davis, who was one time the owner of the property, for a milker. For people to milk the cows, your family had to provide them with a place to live. But they had to be up at four o'clock in the morning to get the cows in and started by five, and if you lived any distance away, it throws everything off. I remember one winter—and I think it was the winter that we had to air lift hay to the cattle in Elko; it was a long, hard winter—Harry Callahan was milking cows. He milked by hand up on Mount Rose, and he had run out of hay and couldn't get any. He came to Joe Cirone and made an arrangement with him that if we would take these cows and milk them, we would have the milk for the feeding of them. God, they were huge, beautiful animals. And they used to have to duck their heads [to] get into the barn and into the stanchions that we had to hold them. And their udders were . . . Gosh, just magnificently huge, gentle animals, and we fed them all winter, and they were terrific.

I used to fill cream out at the house. I put it in quart jars and after twenty-four hours you turned those jars upside down, and the cream would remain in the jar. It was so good. It really was. I had whipped cream on everything. The only thing I didn't put whipped cream on was beer, and, you know, I think of it now, and it might have been great. I don't know. But I made hot cakes, and they were so light, you'd have to put your fork in them and pull them down out of the air, put them back on the plate. Whipped cream is amazing, some of the properties it has, how it affects food. I used to make pound cakes by the dozen, because I had a lot of eggs. In the spring when the ducks and geese were laying, one goose egg was enough to do three hen eggs, at least. And I'm telling you, I had cakes that used to raise so high. My father used to love to have those plain cakes, but then I'd laced it with rum or something, too, because I didn't want to put any more sugar on it. How dumb, huh?

In addition to farming and raising a family, you certainly kept yourself busy. You worked for Washoe County Social Services and Catholic Welfare Services.

Right. Right. I was working all the time. It was a way that I grew up. Everybody in the family worked, and, you know, the only time I had off were six weeks during the time children were born. My God, that was vacation time.

What were you doing for Washoe County and for Catholic Welfare Services?

I was a social worker. I was the case work supervisor for Washoe County, and I was the pro tem director for Catholic Welfare. They had a priest that was studying in a Washington university. I forget which it was, but he was getting his degree. He had been in the Navy, and he was being trained in social work. His name was Monsignor Smith, and he came out of the Navy and took over Catholic Welfare while I was there. I used to have to put all the girls that I had that were unwed mothers, I put them into Saint Mary's. As it happened my dad got a job there. He was the one that placed the bottles of oxygen at

the various stations in the hospital. While he was there, there was a nun by the name of Sister Gerard; she was the one that took care of the ob-gyn cases. And every morning he'd go by and put in the bottle of oxygen for them, and he'd say, "Good morning, Sister Gerard."

And she'd answer him, "Good morning, Mr. Brady." And they both were from Ireland, and you could hear that they both had soft brogues, not harsh. And he'd take his pipe out of his mouth and say, "Tell me, Sister Gerard, how many were born last night that looks like me?" and he was near seventy at the time.

And she'd, [saying it with an Irish accent] "Oh, oh, Mr. Brady, you're a terror. Oh," she says, "go on, go on." And they'd laugh their two heads off, she in her veil and wimple band and my dad with his pipe—he kept the pipe out when he had to connect the oxygen. But it was always a standing joke, "How many were born last night that look like me?" [laughter]

[laughter] Roughly what period of time was this when you were with Social Services?

The year I don't know. It was in the 1970s sometime. Yes, it was in the 1970s, but I couldn't tell you the year. If you need to, you can probably call Catholic Welfare and they can probably tell you. And County Welfare, I don't know if they still have all the records, but I was an active social worker and a case work supervisor for the county.

I imagine you had your hands full.

Yes. It was just at the very beginning of growth. Just the very beginning. And we were so dumb we didn't see it. There are many people who invested in real estate and made enough money to retire on. We didn't, of course, but that's hindsight, kind of.

Do you remember hearing about an old stagecoach stop up on Wedekind?

Yes, I do remember hearing about it. It was a stagecoach stop that came in from, I want to say Susanville, but I'm not sure. It was on the Oppio property, the Oppio ranch or the Van Meter property, which was up there. But I know nothing about it.

Did you say it was on the north side of Wedekind on the curb?

Yes, it was.

You also said there were plenty of abandoned mines out there, mine shafts and things.

Oh, golly, there were holes in the ground. You had to be careful. We used to ride up there; we used to take the horses up there. Because it was rocky, they had to pay attention to where they were placing their feet. They didn't tend to buck. It's like riding a horse in sand or on a beach. They don't buck. They don't want to when they're being trained, because they don't get that leverage. If a rock goes and turns under your foot, you know, you're not as eager to leap up and kick out. So we used to ride up there and ride the green horses. And it spooked me, anyway, to look over the edge—that was in the Wedekind mine area, I understand. There was a lot of mining going on there at one time. I never knew of

it. I never knew. I know there was gunpowder area off Pyramid Road and what is now Queens Way, and they used to have a big plant where they used to manufacture gunpowder, and it closed down. I remember for years after they used to go in there and find caches of gunpowder, but I never had anything to do with that.

You were also a 4-H leader. The Tumbleweed Dog Group?

Yes, I had a group of youngsters that were certainly magnificent. They worked hard, and they trained hard, and they won all kinds of awards. I remember before I took them up for the first time to show in a show ring at Horseman's Park, some people came to me and said, "Maureen, don't take those kids up there. They're way out of their class."

And, of course the first thing that happens is my eyes got red and smoke come out of my ears, and I said, "What! What!" They were trying to be nice to me and not to let these youngsters down. They were special youngsters; they really were—hard-working. They had some scruffy horses, but they had some decent horses too. By the time they got done grooming and fitting these animals, they had changed them. They looked like they had a little care and a little training. But they told me not to take those kids up to Horseman's Park, and of course that's the first thing I did when they said, "Don't do it, because you'll be way out-classed." And, in a sense, they were right, but I remember we took the kids up there, and they sat on their horses for the first portion of the horse show, and they were only in the race track portion of it. They used to do figure-eight, stake, and pole bending, and they were shaking. Their little hands—some of them were big hands—were shaking, waiting for them to be called into the arena. The first time they were called out, two of them won ribbons: a third or fourth place, I forget which. But oh, what a difference it made in their attitude. By the time they got done that summer, they all had won a ribbon of some sort, and it was a different story from then on. They were good showmen, they had great ring manners, and they were just great. I just loved those kids, and, of course, I guess it shows. But we made saddle blankets and other things for our 4-H group, which was green and white. We got all the material for the saddle blankets and the leg wraps and such from Harolds Club from the green felt that used to be on the tables. They had rolled them and stored them in a warehouse, and they gave us whatever we needed. By God, they were sure nice to us. Well, they wanted to see us win, of course, because they had contributed to the well-being of the group. And sure enough, we did. They never entered a parade or set of four that they did not bring home the trophy. They were just great. And anyway, that was my 4-H group.

Do you remember any of the names of the kids?

Oh, sure. Oh! There was Nancy Martin; she had a grey horse—and this was unusual—that she called Casper after Casper the Friendly Ghost. One day, she was riding this horse up by the university on that short street that goes across from Wells Avenue to Valley Road, and the horse dropped dead under her. It was a traumatic thing for her, and it was a terrible thing. She now teaches at—what's the name of the school there on, is it Mill Street where they have the recalcitrant children that do not do what they're supposed to do?

Washoe High?

Yes, she teaches there now. We had a reunion not too long ago. One of the things that we did together was sing Western songs. Not hillbilly songs, not love songs, but Western songs, which are a great deal different than what they call Western songs today. These were about cowboys, about events that took place. We all sang them together, and they were cheerful, no question. “Little Joe, the Wrangler” was one, I remember. It tells about a young kid that was on his own, came up to camp, and he was put to work by the boss though he didn’t know much about it. He went out chasing cows one evening after a lightning storm hit, and he was trampled beneath his horse. Wrangler Joe. Those are the kinds of songs they enjoyed, and others were “Billy Venero” about an Arizona cowboy who had heard about Indians. There was an altogether different sense of responsibility in these songs, rather than my thing needs your thing and so forth and so on, which we get today constantly.

How the hell kids can grow up and be normal is beyond me. I think you have to give them a great deal of credit today if they turn out half-way decent, because they’re being constantly bombarded with second-class, to me, or third-class lyrics. As far as music is concerned, I don’t consider it music; it’s cacophony. And when they get up to dance, there’s no such thing as dancing. [laughter] But that’s hurtful, and I shouldn’t say it, I guess.

You had Nancy Martin in the group, and who else was in the group?

Oh, gosh. See how far astray I went? Nancy Martin, and a little girl by the name of Hope, who was killed in a car accident over in Sierra Valley; Bill. Bill now announces rodeo and roping. Oh, gosh. I’ll tell you, the county extension office probably would have a list of the names.

Bunny Trosi is a longtime friend of Dorothy. She was also in 4-H, right?

Yes, she was. Now, she was over here in Reno, her and her daughter. Her daughter used to show quite a bit, too. Matter of fact, her daughter and my son were king and queen of the rodeo or the horse show—I forget which it was—one year. Both of them, tall and good looking, good horsemen, both of them—good horsemen. Bunny was a good leader. She used to take her kids on overnight horseback rides. She and her husband used to do a lot of the cooking for those outdoor camps. I remember we took the kids before, the Tumbleweed Dodgers, up on Mount Rose up to Dutch Louie’s—I don’t know if you know where that is. It was in the late spring, end of June. And we were going across the flat, and all of a sudden, one of the horses went down into a bog hole, into a muddy area, but it was covered with grass and you couldn’t tell it. But the horse got down, and they had to rope the horse and pull it out at the end of the rope, by taking loops on the saddle horn. Three horses had to pull that one horse out.

It’s a wonder the kid didn’t get injured, but he didn’t. Gosh! You bring back memories I haven’t thought of I bet you, in twenty years or something.

Was she also secretary for both George Wingfield and Wilbur May?

Yes. Yes, she was. And she used to raise quarter horses, and she used to show them, too. Good hand.

Do you remember roughly when you got out of the ranching?

When we were into the Bit and Spur, right.

Was that during the 1970s?

Yes, it was the first part of the 1970s, I believe. My dates are fuzzy.

When did the neighboring ranches begin disappearing? About the same time?

Same time. Exactly the same time.

You knew the Callahan family pretty well?

Not well at all. But we knew of them. Harry came down and asked us about the milk cows that he had. He couldn't feed them, and he didn't want to lose them. He had spent a lot of time breeding them and bringing them up to a standard that he liked. When he came to us and asked us to exchange the milk for the milking, Joe Cirone thought it was a good deal.

Now, did you say Harry had a place—or was it the son, Harry Jr., who had a place called the Brick Yard?

Up in Virginia City, yes. Yes.

That was a place where his grandfather had originally had a brick business?

No, I don't believe that. Maybe his grandfather, Harry's father. Harry's father was never in this country, I don't believe. Don't quote me on this because I don't know what I'm talking about. I'm just trying to remember, and it's not coming easily.

The Brick Yard that Harry Callahan Jr. had was more of a saloon type?

It was a dinner house type. It was an old house that they had converted into a dining area, kitchen, and bar. God, the bar was so small. If the bartender got behind the bar, he could service maybe one or two people. That's how small it was. [laughter] But they would bring it to the table to you. I guess he's gone out of business since.

I'm going to run a couple of names past you, just people that you may or may not have any tidbits of information about. Bunny Trosi is related by marriage to the Trosis, who had Shadow Ranch at one point.

Yes.

Did you know them at all or know of them when they had the ranch?

No, I only knew there was another Trosi part of the family up in Sierra Valley that had a big ranch up there.

How about the Lindleys? Did you know Monaei Lindley or know of her when she was around?

Only knew of her. She had connections to somebody in Wall Street. And if I recall correctly, she had at one time been married to what they call the “Wizard of Wall Street.” I guess it was Lindley. I don’t know. But she had a very lovely place out there, what is now Shadow Lane. And it’s called the Shadow Ranch.

It was a lovely home, they tell me. I don’t know; I’ve never been in it. I was kind of busy doing other things. [laughter]

[laughter] *How about the D’Andreas? Did you know them at all?*

The D’Andreas were related to the Gasparis. The Gasparis and the D’Andreas lived side-by-side off of Pyramid Highway where their ranches were. And they were lovely people, too. They were all nice, I must say, except for one or two that were kind of greedy sorts. And that wasn’t the D’Andreas or the Gasparis.

So, was the Italian ranching community pretty close among itself?

I couldn’t say that. I didn’t know. I didn’t think that they were that close. But there were sure a lot of Italians: “I-talians,” as they said. And, “What are you?”

“I’m I-talian. I-talian.”

I just remembered, my mother says, “How did all these I-talians get out here?” she says. There were so few Irish, and the Irish were here before them. Well, the Irish were more interested spending their money on booze, I guess.

You had mentioned at one point you wanted to tell me something about the Virginia City Irish and Italians.

Oh, that’s a story. That’s just a little joke. Seems that the Irish in Virginia City had gone on strike to get better wages. They suffered terribly with the heat at the depths they had to work in and such. When they went on strike, they really had a good cause for their strike. But some of the mine holders brought in Italian strike breakers, and there was a great deal of animosity between them. One day this Irishman was sitting in the pub, if you can believe it, drinking, and in comes this Italian who had a monkey and a portable organ grinder. He placed the organ grinder up against the bar, and the monkey jumps down onto the bar, and the guy orders whatever he ordered. The poor bartender got frightened, because he knew there was going to be a fracas between the Irish and the strike breaker. With that, he says to the Irishman, “Don’t get yourself upset. Don’t get into a fight.” And before he could say anything more, up comes the monkey—he ran along the bar, and he had his little cup with him, I guess. He used to do collections for the owner, Italian. When the little monkey came up, the Irishman took a quarter or whatever kind of silver he had on the bar and put it in the monkey’s cup. Monkey ran back down to his owner, and the bartender was aghast. He knew there was going to be trouble. But the Italian took the monkey and his organ grinder after he had finished whatever. He had poured a drink, he went out, he’d left the bar. When he had left, the owner comes down and says, “Oh, Pat,” he says, “I’ve got to congratulate you on your restraint,” he

says, “and on your good will.” He says, “You *just* are to be *admired*,” he says, “and to give that little monkey,” he says, “a few coins,” he says, “for coming up and talking to you.”

“Ah,” he says, the Irishman, “you can’t help it.” He said, “Even the I-talians, they’re cute when they’re young.” Anyway, that was the story. I’ve kind of garbled it a bit, but it was better told than I could have.

What’s the biggest change in ranching that you can think of from the time you got into it till the time you got out?

Well, certainly, it has certainly become more mechanized. There were a lot of people that put up hay manually. They put up grass hay and loose hay, and they had their haystacks stacked outside. Now, nothing is done by hand or group labor, as we did it. And there was an awful lot of that around the community here. Now, everybody has tractors and balers and all kinds of marvelous machinery. It, I’m sure, is a terrible cost to the rancher today, just the investment in the equipment.

ART CERFOGLIO

Art Cerfoglio: My dad came over in 1910. His older brother was here already, so he came over. His dad didn't want him to go to the service in Italy, so he sent him over here. He was seventeen years old, and he came through Ellis Island. Then they gave him a train ride, and he came over to Reno. When he got here to Reno, he worked in Dayton on the ranches, and then he worked in Virginia City in the Sutro tunnel with mules, hauling out. From Virginia City, he came to Reno, and that's where he met my mother. She was a Pezzi. The Pezzis had a ranch—where I was born—on the corner of Holcomb and Lakeside Drive. They had their ranch there, and there were five boys and six girls in the Pezzi family. My dad married one of the Pezzi girls. My mother's name was Lida. His brother married Carolyn Pezzi, so two brothers married two sisters.

Susan Imswiler: What were your father and uncle's names?

My father's name was Pete—Pietro. My uncle was Tony—Antonio. I had another uncle named Dominic, but they called him Zena. You see, Genoa and Zena is one and the same city. When I went to Italy three or four years ago, the older Italians called Genoa "Zena," but it's the same town. The newer generation called it Genoa, you see.

I was born on the ranch in Reno in 1919, and I stayed with ranching. I went to school at Huffaker, at the little school out there at the foot of the hill. Then I came in and went to Northside. I was supposed to go to Billingshurst, but I went to Northside, because my uncle Tony lived right on the alley, right at Northside, so I went to Northside. I would have lunch at my uncle's house.

How long did your parents have that ranch?

My grandparents sold that ranch when I was maybe three or four years old, somewhere in there. And they sold it to Joe Geiser. He was a team roper and cowboy around here for a long time. When they sold the ranch my uncle Dominic moved onto Evans Avenue, which is right around the corner down there, and my folks moved onto Spokane Street. Then my dad went to work for the Southern Pacific, and after that he was the foreman on the grounds crew here at the university [University of Nevada, Reno]. He

didn't know how to read or write. He barely learned to write his name, you know. He could talk broken English, but we talked in Italian all the time. So he worked here and then retired. He was retired for fifty years. He lived on the corner of Monroe and Plumas. And I just live up the street, a couple of blocks.

When you went to Huffaker School, it was a two-room schoolhouse, right?

Yes. The first and the third grade were in the little ante room in the back, and the fourth to the eighth was in the big room in the front. We had little rows, seats. Fourth grade was here, fifth grade was here, sixth, seventh, and eighth, see. We had one teacher, and were all in one room, and we had a big pot-bellied stove, with wood, coal. That's how we went. Landas all went there, and the Pisettis, all of them, all the kids from there. The girls usually sat in the front, because they were the smarter ones. We had some good teachers. As I look back now, we had some teachers that would take us on field trips, and then, we'd sneak out and not go back, and all that kind of stuff. Then, we had one teacher, Mrs. Kitchen. She really made us work. She didn't horse around.

How did you get to school when you were going to Huffaker?

Oh, well, horseback. When I first started, we lived over on the Holcomb Ranch. My dad was the irrigator for the Holcombs at that time. We lived about a mile south from the Lumberjack on South Virginia Street, and we used to walk west up to the V & T Railroad tracks to South Virginia Street. That's where we would catch the bus to go to school. We used to put horseshoes and rocks on the track to derail it. [laughter] We were just little kids, but anyway, we done that. We went to school there, and then we'd take the bus, and they'd dump us off, and we'd walk down through the field and go home.

But then, when we got to the fourth grade, we were living on Holcomb Lane, running the Holcomb Ranch for the bank. My dad used to lease it from the bank, because the Holcombs had lost it during the Depression. The receivers for the bank were Leo F. Schmidt and John Muller. They were both at different times, but Leo Schmidt was first, then John Muller, and we worked for them. When we did that, then I'd ride my horse. It was about a mile and a half, I guess, down to Huffaker School, and we had a shed for the horses. The Lombardi girls, they would come, but they had a little cart drawn by a horse, and there were two girls. They'd ride in the buggy, and they'd come that way. We had feed for our horses and water there, and after school we'd ride home.

During the Depression we always milked fifteen, twenty, twenty-five cows, but we milked them by hand. There were no milking machines or nothing. That was our meals. That kept us going in the wintertime, the check from the milk and the cream—we used to sell milk and cream to Crescent Creamery.

In 1936 we had that big snow storm and all you could see was the trees and the telephone poles. The fence posts were all covered. To feed the cows, we used to have to ride horseback and rope a bale, and the horse would go over drifts, and haul the bales out there for the cows to eat. After a few days, they'd tramp the snow down and we'd have a place to feed them all the time. Then, to get the milk to the highway, to South Virginia Street, my dad had to build a big sled with four horses—two horses to break the trail in front and the other horses pulling the sled. We'd get the milk to the truck to pick up on South Virginia Street.

How long was the snow that deep?

Oh, a long, long time—most of the winter. Most of the winter. We used to feed the cattle from [Bill] Moffatt. There was nobody buying hay or nothing. Nobody had any money. Of course, Moffatt was a big cattleman here. He had Manteca-Moffatt beef in California. His home place was right across from the Atlantis. He had a big two-story house there. He had a fellow by the name of Ed that used to work for him, take care of his horses and stuff. When we'd feed the cattle, and Moffatt would come and look at them, Ed would ride his horse on a trot up to the corrals. Then, Moffatt would come in his car and get off of his car and get on the horse and pick out the cattle. Then Eddy would bring the horses back, and Moffatt would go on. But we used to have to feed twice a day, sometimes three times a day for two dollars and fifty cents a ton, and lucky to get somebody to buy it. There was nobody to buy things during the Depression, you know. So, we did that, but we didn't suffer in the Depression, being on a ranch, because we had the cows, we had the gardens, we had everything.

We used to work the men from six in the morning. Breakfast was six o'clock. They'd have to get up before breakfast and harness the horses and get them all ready. Then, they'd come in and have breakfast. Then, they'd go out and work. They'd work until 11:30, then they'd bring the horses in, give them water and a little hay, come in, have lunch, and then they'd go back out and work till 5:30, and then come in. They'd have to take care of the horses. Us kids would have to get up in the morning around three-thirty, four o'clock and milk the cows, feed all the animals, so we were ready to go by six o'clock. We'd pay the guys two and a-half-dollars a day, plus board and room.

We done everything with horses. We bought our first tractor, probably, in 1935, and that helped out, but we done everything with horses. We used to hay all summer long, first crop, then second crop, then third crop. Then we used to go up Mt. Rose where the Christmas Tree restaurant is. We used to go up there with the big wagon, four horses, and park the wagon up on the hillside where there was a bank. We used to go down the hill with the horses, pick up the burnt wood, haul it up, load it on the wagons and take it home. We used to do that in the fall, so we'd have enough wood all summer long to cook, because everything was wood and coal. We never had water in the house until 1939. We never had electricity till 1939, either. All was the lamps, around the table. Of course, the wine and the glasses were always there, you know, Italian. We used to make wine and that sort of stuff.

You were growing grapes here in Reno?

No, no. All the ranchers would get together. We knew everybody, you know. From Virginia Street out, there was Thompsons; there was Holcombs, and there was Wheelers, that weren't Italian. The rest were all Italian. We'd all get together, and we'd order a ton; Ferettos would order a ton, Pisettis would order a ton of grapes, and bring it in by car. We'd come in with the teams and bring them out, and then we'd go from house to house and make wine in September. Then we repeated the same thing in December when we made salami and stuff for everybody. We used to go up hunting horseback up on Mt. Rose and hunt deer. In them days there wasn't a tag. There was a game warden, but we knew him, and we'd kill a lot of deer and bring it down, and make meat and mix it with beef and stuff and have salami and all that stuff. We used to feed the men that way. Then, in the winter time, we wouldn't keep everybody, but we'd keep a couple of men, and they just stayed. We'd give them fifteen dollars a month, and they stayed, and we'd give them board and room. They helped us through the winter.

What kind of an arrangement did you have with the grocery store?

There was an Italian firm in town by Brunetti. Rocco and Brunetti. We used to go in there and buy all summer long on faith. Then, the end of the year, when we sold everything, then we'd go in and pay them off. My mother used to buy spaghetti in wooden boxes. The spaghetti was about that long [indicates about two feet], and she used to take it and break it, because we had soup every night. That was the staple. Every night was soup. We'd buy all our groceries there; every rancher, all of them. They'd all go to Brunetti because they were Italian and they knew, and they kept the books. That's the way we operated. We set it up in the fall and pay all the bills, and then start all over in the spring again. [laughter] Buy everything in big quantities, you know. But then, my mother used to jar vegetables and stuff. We had no refrigeration. You had these cellars in the ground, rock cellars, to put stuff in. We saved it that way. But the ladies worked hard. Gee. My mother used to milk cows, raise a garden, feed all of the crew. I had a sister that would help her. But us boys, we were out with my dad working all the time.

When I was fourteen, I was going to Reno High School. We lived out there, and he bought me an old 1926 Oldsmobile, because my dad was Italian—no ball. I didn't get a chance to play football, basketball, or nothing. Reno High left out at 3:30, and if I wasn't home by quarter to four, there was razor strap on my behind. [laughter] And the morning we'd work. Before we'd go to school we'd have all the chores to do, so we missed out socially at high school, because we couldn't go, you know. We couldn't go.

When did you first start working on other ranches?

My first job was when I was going to high school. I was a delivery boy for Commercial Hardware in between. After school and stuff I'd work there. Mr. Horgan was a nice man. I got married when I was working there, and he gave me all kinds of stuff: ovens, electric appliances. But I worked. I was a ranch kid, and I worked. I didn't horse around. I delivered, and I remember one time . . . we each had a cash register in them days, and I had an old bank bag where I put my money. One time he called me up and he said, "You're twenty dollars short." Twenty dollars short. But he was a smart old guy, and he didn't say nothing. He just told me. Next morning he calls me up, and he said, "Do you know," he was teasing me. He said, "You know, you're still twenty dollars short." What had happened, I'd put this twenty dollars in the bag, then silver on top, and the bag had crumpled, and this twenty dollar bill got stuck in the groove in the bottom of the bag. He was smart enough to go through the bag and find it. [laughter] But he liked me. I worked. I didn't horse around. I worked for him, and from there I got drafted in the Army. I got drafted in the Army, so they took all the ranch kids from here and put us in two buses, and we went to Salt Lake City. In them days, we had to go to Salt Lake City to see if we'd pass. But quite a few of the ranch kids didn't pass, because they had some defect of some kind. But of course, I passed.

Mr. Wooster was principal at Reno High School when I went there, and he was on the draft board. He wrote me a letter, and he said he knew I was a farm kid. He said, "You got to get into some kind of a naval or some kind of an army thing." I had a friend that was a big football player at the University of Nevada, here, that I knew, and he married Senator Scrugham's daughter. This goes to show you how things will work out. So I called him up. I said I got to find a job. He was a lieutenant in the Navy through Scrugham—big guy, six foot, two hundred and fifty, sixty pounds, played up here at Nevada. I went down to see him at Hawthorne, and he got a list of stuff, said, "You can have any job you want. Take one job you want." So I looked around. I really wanted to drive a bus. But he said, "Ah," he said, "That's not good enough." He said, "Get something else." So I went in the carpenter shop. I knew

how to fix fences, but that's all. I didn't know how to run the machines. But being a ranch kid, I'd go in in the mornings, and all the kids would sit around, have coffee and stuff. Well, I'd go grease the machines or sweep the floor or do something, because I didn't drink coffee. I drank coffee in the morning, but that's it. I wasn't used to going around and doing that sort of stuff. So, the boss got to like me, and he made me foreman.

Well, that raised hell because these guys were there long before me. My job was to take care of all the officers' houses in the compound. They all had brick houses. Whenever anybody needed a new rug, I'd put in a new rug, or windows, whatever; we maintained the houses. And the waste, you wouldn't believe! Every time a new officer had come in, if we had just put down a rug, they'd want it up. We used to haul it. Well, first we used to let people get some of it. But then people were selling it and doing other stuff, so I'd take it out in the desert and dump it. I stayed there eight months. Then, I got another letter from Wooster, and he said, "You've got to be on the ranch." So, I was 1-A or whatever; I don't remember. There were classifications. So lo-and-behold, I came up to Reno, and I went to work as a dairy foreman on the university ranch, which is the Redfield Ranch now. The university used to own that, but they used to lease it out. They didn't run it.

Mrs. Washburn's husband died, so she hired me as manager of the dairy. I went in there, and I cleaned it all up. I had an old Swiss milker, the nicest old guy; his name was Charlie. He lived up in the barn. They tore the big barn down. It was a big, long barn. We'd milk cows eight at a time. It was probably a four-hour milking period. You had to get the first bunch every time, the second bunch every time, because otherwise you'd lose milk. The ones that milked at six o'clock every morning had to be around six, the next group at seven, and so on. He was a nice man. He had a little dog, and he'd stay up there, and he'd eat up there by himself, and everything else. A lot of times I'd go in the barn, and he had a chunk of bread in his mouth, and he'd grab a teat of a cow and squirt the milk in. He stayed there, but about every six or eight months, he'd go get drunk. He'd leave, and then I had to do the milking, and I didn't know exactly which cows was which. In them days they weren't in the corral. We used to turn them out in the pasture. It was Patch Lane. Now it's McCarran and all that stuff. I'd have to wander up there two or three o'clock in the morning, get the cows in, bring them in. Then I used to have to deliver the milk to Model Dairy. They were milking cows down on Peckham Lane at that time, too. They had a dairy there. Ernie Brooks was the owner of the Model Dairy. When their guys went on the binge, they'd call me up, and I'd go down and help them milk.

I stayed there till 1946 and then I quit there and I went to work for Union Ice Company. I was delivery boy, delivering ice, and then I worked myself up to the route superintendent there, so I was running the crew. In 1951, I quit there and went to manage Rancho San Rafael.

During World War II the big push was to keep the milk production up, and you needed high butterfat, right?

Yes. Oh, yes. But now, it's reversed. You had to have 4.5 percent butterfat to get top milk.

Tell me about the years you were at Rancho San Rafael. You were manager there, and you were there from 1951 to 1987?

Well, I was there, but not always on the place. I moved on the ranch in 1951. Mr. and Mrs. Herman owned the ranch. There were three boys, and they were Austrians. They came over from Austria,

and they invented some kind of a substance to blow the soot out of the steamships, and they sold their patent before 1930, for \$58 million. Rafael was the older and the main guy. I never met Rafael. He died before I got to be manager there. I want to tell you the whole story, but I want to get it in line if I can.

They lived in Beverly Hills, and every year I'd go down for vacation. We went to every place in town—first class. They belonged to this Blue Book Club in L.A., and we went to all the racetracks and all the clubs. Remember when they had that \$64,000 question and that jockey was winning? I met him at Romanoff's, and we went to the Brown Derby, all those big places. They'd take us out every night

Mr. Herman, Norman Herman, which was the youngest of the ones, was the manager of the ranch here. He had a colored chauffeur, and they had maids and stuff, but nobody could drive like Art. He used to call me "Ahhrt," you know. So whenever I was there, I was the driver. The colored guy wouldn't drive. And I'd take Mr. Herman to his office down in Culver City every morning. He'd go down there and raise hell. He was an older man by that time, and he used to have to have insulin shots. He'd go down there, and we'd scare up everything, then he'd go home and rest in the afternoons. They had Rolls Royces, Cadillacs, Mercedes and stuff, and during the day, he'd just give us a car and, "Go." Me and my wife, we'd go all over.

Where was their house located?

On 804 North Beverly Drive, right on the corner of Rodeo Drive and Beverly Hills. And right behind us was that actress that—she's an old actress there, and her son had got in some kind of a trouble. And the Mays, Wilbur May, you know the Mays store? They lived across the street, and Jack Benny lived down the street from them. I can't think of this actress's name now. But anyway, she had TVs on her hedge all around her house, because her son had done something. He had got in trouble somehow.

What did the Hermans own in relation to Rancho San Rafael? They had Globe, Incorporated?

Yes. That made all kinds of stuff for the Navy—machine shops.

I lived on the ranch from 1951 to 1962. Then, along came Lightning W Ranch. Lightning W was Mr. Weise. By that time Mr. Herman had passed away. I sold all the cows because Mrs. Herman used to like to come, and she used to go down and gamble. She had no interest in the ranch, Mrs. Herman. She had friends here like Mrs. Cord and all, that lived all down there, and they'd go gamble at Harrah's. In them days she'd gamble all night, and when she went to go to the bathroom or something, they'd close off her machines. Nobody could touch them till she came back. She'd wear gloves, and the next morning they were all wore out.

On the ranch for attorneys I had Kearney and Adams. They're an old-time firm here; they're all gone now, but they were the old-time firm here. So, she'd come home, and they'd go back to L.A. Then, I'd go back and pay off her bills at Harrah's through the attorneys.

I still got the key to their house, you know. When they'd go to Europe, I used to go down and sell cattle at the sale yards down there, and I'd buy cattle down there for them. They were in Europe, and it was Sunday morning, and I thought I'd walk down and get the paper. Well, I got about two blocks, and the cops picked me up, and they said, "Where are you going, young man?"

Well, I was a young guy in them days, you know, thirty-some years old. And I said, "I'm walking down....?"

Well, they said, "You don't walk around here." And they said, "Where are you staying?"

I said, "I'm staying at Herman's house up here." They knew him, of course. They have a special police in Beverly Hills, separate from there. So they picked me up, took me down, bought the paper, and brought me back.

I stayed there, and then when they got back from Europe, Mrs. Herman wanted to take me to the Brown Derby in Beverly Hills. When you go to the Brown Derby, you have to have a tie and everything else. I went down there, and, of course, I didn't have a tie, so Mrs. Herman says, "Hey, Captain, get this man a tie." So, he got me a tie, and we went in and had lunch. We'd go to this Covia Room on top of the Hilton, went to all big places. We'd go in there, and she'd find something wrong someplace, all the time. Either the air conditioning wasn't right, "Hey Captain, we want this table over here." They'd say, "We want that table so these young people here can see out the window." We were up on top of the floors. It's kind of embarrassing, but, boy, they'd get away with it. They'd get away with it. She was tough that way, and she'd get her way.

Then we went to the Rose Bowl. They belonged to the Carriage Club, and they'd come pick us up at the house; we went to the Carriage Club, and we had wine and stuff. They had a special bus that took us to the Rose Bowl, parked right up by our seats. I was about four rows behind the thing. President Nixon and them guys was up behind me. [laughter] And I met John Robinson, the coach. They were big donors to Southern Cal—big, big donors—old man Rafael. I met the President. They used to come to the ranch. When I went up to the ranch at San Rafael I built a pond, and then he stopped and would fish. Nobody could fish but his buddies, come from there.

I used to have a Chrysler convertible with the wood sides and everything else. They kept that, and then they kept the big Cadillac limousine with the bar in the back and the seats and everything else. Nobody could drive but "Ahhrt," so I went every day to the 1960 Olympics, every day, and drove up all the guys. They'd come from there, and most of them were plastered by the time they got there—judges and lawyers from L.A., all their friends. I drove them up every day. I saw all the Olympics, and we had the best parking. We had a special parking place where we parked our limousine. We never had to walk, never. When we went to the races and stuff, we didn't sit down. They belonged to the—what do they call that club? Anyway, it's all leather seats, and you get away from all the people. They'd buy me these big cigars, and I'd sit up there. I didn't have a penny in my pocket. [laughter] It was really something.

I have four children, three girls and a boy. And lost a girl and a boy. My boy was thirteen when he passed away, but Hermans brought us down to L.A. He flew in a doctor from India, didn't cost us a penny. Flew in the best doctor he could. We lost him anyway, because he had cerebral palsy, but what I want to say is they just treated us royally.

Mr. Herman loved the ranch. He loved the geese, and one time we had a goose that made her nest right in our yard. He walked with a cane, kind of a stiff leg, on account of his diabetes. Every day he'd go over there and try to see things hatch. It takes twenty-one days for a goose to hatch. I'd come out, tell Mr. Herman, "Leave it alone, because you're going to scare her away," you know. But every day he'd go over there and poke this thing. [laughter]

He liked to buy cattle. We'd get on the road, and he'd buy cattle. Equipment, no. Buy just whatever we have to, but cattle, he loved that. We used to go to all the sales and stuff. But then in 1962, I had lost my boy, and Mr. Weise come along, wanted to hire me to run Lightning W Ranch.

Oh, let's go back a little. Before that, Mr. Herman died, and I sold all the cattle and everything else, took care of everything for Mrs. Herman. He left a will, and when he made the will, as I told you, they had Kearney and Adams and those guys as attorneys and the bank—First National Bank, I think it was at that time. But he left it so that Mrs. Herman, if she didn't like what they were doing, she could fire

them. He left me some money, and he had a secretary that was with him for some thirty-some years. I can't think of her name. She was with him for a long time, and she was his right-hand man, you might say, because she took care of everything. So that came up, and Mrs. Herman cut everybody else out but me. I got mine. She cut this lady out that had been all these years his private secretary, and she was like a member of the family. But boy, she cut her out. She cut the colored chauffeur out; she cut everybody out. The only one that got anything was me. Then, she found out that the bank was selling all her blue chip stocks and replacing them with common stock, so she fired the whole works. One of them was head of the bank here. It'll come. Anyway, she fired them, and got rid of everything. She took over herself, and she's done very well. They had a lot of money.

Then, I managed Lightning W, but I still stayed on, ran San Rafael. Mrs. Herman didn't give me the ranch, but I'd pay the water and the taxes, and I could do whatever I wanted, because she didn't want to be bothered with it. Then it came along that they wanted to sell it. She wanted to sell the place, but I kept telling her, "Don't sell it to houses. We don't want houses on there; we want something else." So it went along and went along, and I kept running the place, and I still ran the place when I was with the university. I still had control of the place up until they sold it. When they put McCarran in, McCarran came through and split the ranch, see. So, first thing I done, I told her, "We got to have an underpass under the thing, so we can move cattle from the other side, because you can't cross McCarran with the cattle or ranch equipment." We had a big battle about that with the highway department, but she was tough. She wouldn't budge. We got the underpass and got it all fixed up, and then along came the retirement board, and they bought it. Oh, by the way, they bought the ranch in 1934, and they paid \$12,000.

For Rancho San Rafael?

Yes. And you know, it was sitting there, but none of us had any money during the Depression. None of us had any money. So they bought it. And they sold it for over \$7,000,000. They built a big house there—a big, big house. When they'd come, probably, once a year or so, they'd throw parties. They had all kinds of money. They'd lay out the red carpet, and then I'd have to go down to Washoe Market—at that time Gaines was head of the Washoe Market—and they'd buy tons and tons of liquor and stuff for this big party that they were throwing. Then they'd hire girls to come and serve. Well, if they had in their mind they were paying a dollar an hour for the girls, if they wanted a dollar and a quarter, we didn't take them. Stuff like that. When I'd buy stuff for working cattle, he'd always want to buy the cheapest stuff.

In those days Cannan was the drugstore on Commercial Row, and he'd go down there. Of course, I knew all those guys, but sometimes when we were working cattle, I'd sent him down to buy some more vaccine or something. He'd drive down on the street, park on the street, toot the horn, and the guys would come out and wait on him. Then, when he'd leave, I'd go down, and they'd say, "That so-and-so. Who does he think he is?"

I'd say, "Well, why do you wait on him, then, for?" You know what I mean? But for certain things they were all up, and certain things, boy, they just wouldn't do.

So then, I went to Lightning W, and he [Weise] built me a new house. And I had another good relationship with him. But you see, I worked. I used to get up three or four in the morning and irrigate; I used to work. And anyway, I went there in 1962, and he built me a house. He went to my wife and said, "What kind of a house? How do you want this house?" And he built it for us. In the meantime, he gave me a car, and I'd come right from San Rafael, and I'd go work up there. Then, when the house was ready,

we moved in, and I had complete control of everything. At Rancho San Rafael, I had registered Hereford cattle, and at Lightning W, I had registered Angus cattle.

I revamped that whole ranch. Mr. Weise used to own an electrical company in L.A., but he sold it. It was valves and pipes and stuff. The foremen he had there before, or Mr. Weise and them, made a contraption system where you get the water in the line, but you couldn't find the damn thing. So I took that all out, tore that all out, and put in an irrigation system. I cemented all the ditches and revamped the whole irrigation system. I think, when I went there, they were cutting 400 bales of hay. When he hired me, he said, "I want the place kept nice. No matter if we make any money or not, I want the place to look nice." So, I worked there and bought cattle and fixed it all up. He spent a ton, tons of money cementing all those ditches. When I left, we were raising 14,000 bales of hay. I took a Cat, and I cut down some sage brushes, and I leveled the fields, and I did a lot of work. Then I wanted new equipment, and he said, "Go ahead. Go get bids on the equipment."

So I did. I went and got bids, and I got harrow beds, balers, tractors—everything I needed to run the ranch. I gave him the figures. One month passed, two months passed—no equipment. I thought, "What the hell?" One day he comes and he says, "You got three days to go buy your equipment." I guess he got some money somehow. So I went down and bought all new equipment: harrow beds and the whole bit. Built a new barn, hay barn, everything else.

The two men were different, night and day. If Mr. Herman told you at nine o'clock, he was there at nine o'clock. Mr. Weise would say—I'd go buy cattle or something, and then I'd invite him down to look at it. "Oh, I'll be down tomorrow morning." He'd never show up. Nothing. Never show. It was different. I wasn't used to that, but I didn't care, because I was running everything anyway. I stayed there six years. I left in 1968. By that time, I had everything all fixed. I worked there all those years without vacation, so he decided that he'd give me a trip—me and my wife and my family—a trip to Hawaii. So we went five days on the boat, and gee, that's the best time I ever had. The water was just like glass all five days. I'd sit out in the afternoon, in the night and the evening, watch the dolphins and swimming with my cigar, trap shoot out the back, you know, and everything else. He fixed everything first class. We went in private limousines everywhere, went to every island, everything all pre-arranged. And geez, when we got around Diamond Hill, the boat stopped, and we threw quarters over for the divers to go. Then, when we landed there was a big boat, a musical thing, and of course, the girls kiss you, and all that. [laughter] Oh, it was tremendous. We went everywhere.

When I came back, I was down raking hay one day, and Bill Behrens was the animal specialist here at the university. He came out one day, and he said, "You know, there's three jobs open at the university, and we'd like you to apply."

I said, "No. I don't . . ."

"Oh," he said. "Fill the thing in anyway, and then you take it, if you want one."

I got to thinking. My girls were going to Wooster High School, and they were big enough to drive. Of course, there was just the two-way highway, see. And they were starting to date, and all that kind of stuff. I got to thinking about the damn thing. I'd just got back from Hawaii, maybe a month or two. I don't know what it was. So I filled it out. In about two days, I got a call. They wanted to interview me. I said, "Well, I don't know." But I was talking to my wife, and we decided, gas and tires, and the girls would have dances or dates after school or come in to sports things, because there was sports. They played sports in school. I let them play, because I didn't get to play. You know what I mean. So we thought, "Well, hey. Maybe let's go look and see what this thing is." So, I came in and hell, I went to Dr.

Ely. He was Dr. Beaumont's assistant. By the way, I'm going to lunch with Beaumont the nineteenth, I think it is. His two sons are here and they always call me.

Now, where was I? Oh, to Dr. Ely. So, he said, "We got three jobs. We got the dairy. We got Valley Road. And we got S Bar S. Have your pick."

Well, I didn't want to go to the dairy, because I had already been at the other end up there. So I picked Valley Road. When I came in, there was a two-story house down where the shop is now on Valley Road. They had an old house there. I looked at that house, big holes, dirty, you know, and they had Mormon guys in there. There were cigarette butts all over the beds, all over. I said, "If I have to live there, I'm not coming." By that time they were putting in the "spaghetti bowl," and there were houses for sale down there. You know that house that's on Sadlier Way? They bought that for me and put it there, and then in the meantime, they rented me a house up on West Seventh Street, and I lived up there. So, wherever I went I got treated royally. But anyhow, they moved that house there and fixed it all up, and then I moved in there, and I stayed there and ran that. I built the horse facility there, while I was there. We built that.

Then they were having trouble at main station on McCarran. A dean had come to me. Roy Butler was the farm superintendent, and Jim Hunter was the cow superintendent there, and they couldn't get along. What Roy wanted, Jim didn't want, and vice versa, and they'd fight. So, Beaumont would get me, and I know both. He'd say, "You go down there and make a decision, one way or another." So no matter which way I went, I was a S.O.B. from the other guy. They weren't getting along, so Beaumont came, and he said, "I want you to move down to the main station."

I said, "No. I don't want to go down." I had a nice, easy job there. It was nice.

"No," he said, "you've got to go down there."

I said, "No, I'm not going down there."

"Oh," he said, "go down there for about six months, anyway."

"Well," I said, "Oh, well, OK." But I said, "Listen. If I go down there, I want to be the boss. I don't want to have another guy to fight with. I want to run the show. If you want me to go down there, I'll go down there for six months." And I really didn't intend to stay. But then, I got down there and got involved, and I stayed there the rest of the time.

That was the old Gilbert-Flick Ranch?

Yes.

And some of the Jones Ranch?

We bought the Jones Ranch after. I'll get to that part, but in between, like I told you, Weise was a guy that you never knew what he was going to do. He never bothered me. He didn't bother my operation, but he would tell you something and then never follow up on it, and I wasn't used to that. Weise was born in that ghost town, Bodie, and he was raised in a poor family. He went to school at Berkeley, and he was so poor that he used to wear an overcoat, and then they'd go in these restaurants and stuff chicken and stuff in their pockets. Anyway, he got through. He graduated as an engineer. He got a job with Standard Oil Company, and then, he bought this—I can't think of the name of this company that had all these pipes and stuff.

So he did that, and then he divorced his wife. He has two boys, Sandy and Bob, who lived in my house all the time, because those rich people don't want the kids around. The kids had to stay in an apartment. I could go in the house, but the kids couldn't go in the house unless they asked dad. But he was a woman chaser. First year I went there, he had a—we liked her. She was nice lady. They'd go to these parties and they'd pick up these young ladies. So, she lasted, I don't know, six or eight months. He used to buy them a station wagon, so we found out what was happening. Every time there was a station wagon missing, we knew that that gal was gone, that there was another one coming in. [laughter] The first four years there, the ladies would come and stay for six or eight months. Then, he'd marry them, and when they left, all they got was a damn station wagon. Then another one would come along.

Then this lady came. She had something to do with Lassie. She had two kids—a nice lady, nice, nice lady. Of course, he wanted her to farm out her kids. They didn't want the kids around there. But she stuck up for them. She stayed a while, but when it got through to her, she said, "If I have to leave my kids, I'm leaving." And she left. I don't know if she stayed a year or whatever. Then another one came along. We called her Trixie. She was the wife of Wilbur May before. [laughter] They all run in that circle. They go to these parties, and then they pick up these girls, these ladies.

Well, anyway, she came along, and she was giving me a little trouble with the water. Whenever he'd go someplace, she'd have boyfriends come in. We had a pond up there, the thing that I used to use for irrigation. But she didn't want me to take the water out, because then she'd go out and thrashed her boyfriends and all this kind of stuff, you know. [laughter] So I had a few battles with her. She was one that would go out and pick up dogs and bring them home. Then he'd have to give her hell and make her take them back. Finally she left, and she married a veterinarian, Dr. Dale. He had a veterinary clinic in Carson. She stole a lot of stuff from the house and was taking it over there. She went to work for Dale part time, just because she had nothing to do. Then she left and married this Dr. Dale.

Then, one day Mr. Weise came along, and he said, "Let's go for a little ride." He had just bought a new Cadillac. Oh, and talking about cars, any time Herman bought cars, they bought them here. All their mail used to come to me, and then I'd have to forward it. Then, when they bought a new car, I'd have to deliver it to L.A., which was a hell of a job. [laughter]

But anyway, Mr. Weise bought a new car, a new Cadillac and said, "I want to go to Bodie."

So, I said, "OK." I'm in just my ranch clothes. So, we go and go and go. We wound up in Grand Canyon, and we stayed at Furnace Creek a couple, three days there. Then, we got back in, and we went to Mexico. You know, just one set of clothes—that's all I had. We were supposed to go and come back. But this is the kind of guy he was. We were down in Mexico, and he said, "You know, you can't drink this water down there." I had some cigars in my pocket. I'm walking down the street in a little town in Mexico. These little kids come up in front of me, and they were playing around, you know. They stole cigars out of my pocket. I didn't even know it. [laughter]

So then we went around by the Salton Sea. We came in by Indian Springs, went to Palm Springs, stayed in Palm Springs for a couple days, and of course, we went to all the good places. Then he said, "I'm going to stay in Beverly Hills. I'm going to send you home." So, he got me a red carpet. You ever fly in red carpet? I didn't even know it existed. He got me a ticket on a red carpet, and here I am in my good clothes, and you go up, and they load your things. You don't load with the passengers. No, you load separate. They carry your bags on. They give you cigars. There's ladies with these dresses, short dresses, running around taking care of you and everything else. [laughter] He put me on this red carpet flight, and I flew home. [laughter] Gee, it was hard to go to him and say I'm going to leave. And he said, "How come?"

“Well, I got a chance at the university. The university is going to have a pension.”

Because you know, you work for these people, but tomorrow morning they can say, “Hey, you’re done. Get out,” and you get nothing. And of course, god, every Christmas he’d give me twenty-five, three thousand dollars. He bought me buckles and all kinds of stuff.

And so I went to him and told him, “I want to go first of October to the university.”

And he says, “You can’t leave me here like this.”

“Well,” I said, “I’ll try and find somebody for you.” So I had to go to the university and tell them I couldn’t go. I didn’t go to the university till the first of January. I found him a replacement, but the kid was a graduate from the college here. I knew the kid, and he had graduated, and he was looking for a job. He used to see me riding around, smoking a cigar in a pick-up. But he didn’t know that I got up at three or four in the morning and worked after supper. After supper I’d go out and change water or bale hay or something. He thought he’d just ride around. He lasted about six months; he couldn’t handle it. So then I found him another guy, Joe Cirone, for him. Joe Cirone went, and he stayed quite a while, and his son still works up there. And you know Maureen [Brady]?

Yes.

Well, anyway, I found him, and Joe went there, and he stayed quite a little while. And then, of course, him and Maureen got separated; Joe started running around on, you know, race horses and all that kind of stuff.

You were just going to go out to the Main Station for six months, initially, right?

Yes. But then the wife liked it, and we moved into the big house, which was nineteen rooms. It’s the old Questa house. Then the president of the university moved in there. No, before that Flick bought the place, and he had remodeled it. They had a big rock fireplace. They had fixed it up nice, with a wet bar and the whole six yards. First the president of the university moved in there; then Beaumont moved in there; and then he didn’t want to live there anymore, so they gave it to me, being the superintendent there. And we enjoyed it. It was nice, and they paid all my expenses, everything. I didn’t have to pay nothing to live there.

I went in there, and I took over, and we put in the new mill, built all of those sheds there, built most of a feed lot. They had already started, but I built all the new feed lot. The meats lab was already built. I don’t know who built the meats lab, because Flick and them were running it before the university had it. So I took all that, and then I leveled it off. I put in all new cement ditches and poured them all ourselves. I used to have nine men. I used to drive a big truck and had guys with the levels and guys fixing the cement ditches and putting in the boxes. We’d go around, we had regular trucks come every fifteen minutes, cement trucks, so we wouldn’t stop. We’d tie them on at a big old eight-wheel-drive army truck that I pulled with, and we’d tie the cement truck onto to ours. When we moved it, everything moved at once, and I had guys stomping the cement. Hell, we’d pour half a mile a day of cement, and we poured all those ditches and leveled a lot of ground. I put in a lot of new ground. It went across the creek south, that was all swamp, and I drained all that and fixed it all up. Boy, it was beautiful. We had a nice place there.

I ran that with an iron hand, but you see, I had Beaumont, and I was Beaumont's boy. Whatever I wanted was OK with Beaumont, and boy, he'd protect me. There was nobody could touch me, really, but you know, I worked. I remember one time Ely came by at six o'clock, and I was already on the swather coming up to Valley Road to cut the hay at Valley Road, and they never saw anybody like that around there. They never had anybody that would work. If I got calls at night that cattle got out, I had a pickup with the spotlight on top so I could go around and look for the cattle. Most of the guys go to work eight o'clock and at 3:30 they go home, but I wasn't used to that. I couldn't handle that. I didn't know what to do, you know. I had a dairy manager, but you know a lot of times at three or four in the morning I'd go down there to see if the kids would show up to milk. I didn't have to, but I would—it's just my nature.

All the departments come down there and want a piece of ground for their project, for this project, for that project, and I would tell them where they could go, where they could use it, if it worked. Some of those guys would want to go down the middle of your field and put up a project, and then your operation wouldn't work. But we got along real well, and we done fine. I started that calves-for-college program, and that was a big success. Beaumont came along and said, "You want to start the calves-for-college?"

And I said, "Well, yes." So, what I would do, lot of times I'd use Beaumont's car or somebody's car and I'd go to all these ranchers. I don't know what it is about me, but I'm one of the guys. I can go to these ranchers, and they didn't see a guy come in there with a suit and a state car. I'm a rancher, and I could relate to the guys. Hell, Behrens and Drake and a lot of those guys tried to go. They couldn't get any calves. They couldn't get them. They wouldn't give them to them, you know. But hell, I used to get us guys a hundred calves donated. I got them from Ely. I got them everywhere. I'd go even to Oregon. I got some out of Alturas, that's in California. We'd bring them in and feed them, and then we'd slaughter them, we'd take off for expenses, and then we'd give out scholarships to the kids. When first we started, it was only twenty-five dollars. But then, it went up. When we quit we had over \$100,000 in the bank, and we were giving scholarships. At night, when they had the events, I'd call out the names of the kids with scholarships. I didn't lie to the guys, you know. I'd tell them, "I'll see that your kid gets in if he wants to come." That'd give a scholarship to all these ranchers, and it worked out real good.

But then, when Jones came in, he demolished the whole thing. We don't know where the money went, and he cut it out. I worked two years for Jones. Then, he came back one day, and he said, "You willing to start that calves-for-college program?"

And I said, "No. No more for me." I'd done it for ten years, but I could go to these ranchers and get the calves. I found out, some places I'd go and there were two owners, like, I don't know if you know Frenchie up at Warner Creek Ranch? That's up by Denio, up in there. Well, I knew Frenchie and his wife. His wife was a girl that went to school at Cal Poly, and when she graduated she wanted to marry a cowboy, and she married Frenchie. [laughter] They had, I don't know, five or six kids. They had the schoolhouse right on the ranch, you know. The teacher would go there and teach. So, I went there, and of course I stayed with Frenchie. They had promised me a calf. Bidart was their other partner. Well, I didn't stay at his house, so boy, I didn't get a calf. So, Mrs. Frenchie, Frenchie's wife—I can't remember her name now. She felt so bad, so she had some pigs for 4-H kids. So, I left without a calf, and I went down to DeLongs. When I got to DeLongs, there was a phone call, and it was her. She said, "I want you to come back. I feel bad that this happened." And so, I went back, and she gave me two pigs. [laughter]

For the calves-for-college program.

Yes. Yes. The calves-for-college program. But I'd run into that, and people were funny, you know, and boy, open arms. If I didn't sleep at their place, look out, but I got a lot of calves.

These scholarships were for agriculture kids?

Oh, yes, just agriculture kids. And then I used to give them up around Cedarville. I know Berryessas and a lot of those ranchers from going there. A lot of those ranches, part of their ranch was in Nevada and part in California. But their house was in California, see. Their address was California, and their kids wanted to come to Nevada. So, we'd fake the address, and we'd get the kid to come here, on the scholarship, and it worked out. But it was very, very successful. One time went up in Elko at Jiggs—I can't think of their name now. I went there, and they wanted to give me a calf. It was big legged. I said, "I don't want that god-damned thing. I don't want that calf. I want a half-way decent calf."

So, they said, "I tell you what we'll do." They had a young boy that was a roper, and they said, "We'll give you each a chance to rope a calf." I could rope, just ranch roping, but I was lucky. [laughter] The kid ran out and missed the calf. And lo-and-behold, if I didn't catch the calf. Then I got to pick what calf I wanted. [laughter]

One time they hired a colored guy here. I can't think of his name now. He was in the ag department. He's not here anymore. And he wanted to come with me. Boy, you get a colored guy out there, those things—you know, he was forward. He'd ask for coffee. The next year I'd go back, they'd say, "If you bring that so-and-so here, we're not going to give you a calf." But that's the way that one went. It went along; it was real good. We were giving twenty-five or thirty scholarships at the end, about \$250 apiece, you know.

They sold off the old Redfield place by the Main Station, right?

Well, Flick bought the Mapes and the Questa Ranch and put them together and made one ranch out of it, and then when he sold to Gilbert, he built the house where the Manogue School used to be, across McCarran by the river. Gilbert ran the two ranches and then sold them to the university. Then the university acquired the Jones Ranch, about three hundred and some-odd acres of the Jones Ranch. But what happened there was, the old Jones people died. The boy was running the ranch, but he was not a farmer, and he was losing it. So Dermody stepped in there and traded. He bought the boy a ranch up in Alturas or some place, and he gave him some warehouses. There was a girl involved, too, and he gave her some warehouses and stuff.

Dermody got the ranch, and then we bought Jones Ranch from Dermody. I don't think it has ever been settled, the mountain behind the dairy up there. Half of it belongs to Dermody, and half of it belongs to the university. I don't know if they've settled that yet. It hadn't been settled when I left. But that's how we acquired the Jones Ranch. So that whole part that was all university clear down to the sewer plant, and then we built the dairy on the hill. Oh, then the university sold west of McCarran—it was Boynton Lane then—western McCarran to Dermody, from the church. Flick sold the church, clear south, clear down to whatever that street is down there.

There are all houses in there now at the other end, probably about a half a mile south on McCarran, on the west side. They sold all that to Dermody, and south of Mill Street and west of McCarran. Now, north of Mill Street, the university still owns up to the Extension Office. So, they sold that to Dermody, and then we just transferred the water over to the other side. Then, there's a big creek

that goes down along from there. I went across the creek and leveled all that land and put in all those fields across the creek, which just about doubled the acreage that they had before. Of course, we drained all that land and took out all those tules, leveled it, put in all the cement ditches and put pipes across the ditch, the creek, and did all that. That goes clear over to Hidden Valley.

Just before you get to Hidden Valley, all of those pipes, that still all belongs to the university. But now, I understand, that's where they want to put that new golf course, but the ground is so damn valuable, I don't know what the university is going to do. It's not good for farming. I used to winter all the cattle down there, because it is alkali, and keep them off the pastures. When I went there, they'd start feeding the cattle in October. But I developed all that ground and fertilized it, and I didn't use to feed any cattle till December.

Save a lot of hay money.

Yes. I used to buy all the hay, all the cattle, everything, even for the project guys. I didn't let anybody touch any of that kind of stuff. I did all that. Of course, I had Beaumont behind me. We went all over. We went to Texas; we went to Chicago, bought cattle out of Purdue University; and Nebraska, Clay Center in Nebraska, everywhere. I traveled all over buying cattle. I would pick out all the cattle. I bought Charolais, Brangus, Angus, Herefords, Santa Gertrudis, Charolais, everything. I'd travel. I'd go to Texas. I spent five days at the King Ranch. They donated a prize Santa Gertrudis bull, something like \$250,000 bull to the university. I went down and got it and hauled it up there, and I'd put it on pastures along the road, so people could see it. I had a big sign up there. See, I could do that, you know. But I had a ranch foreman; I had a cow foreman and all that. I'd bring them together in the mornings and we'd set down what I wanted done, and then I traveled. I traveled. I traveled a lot.

Now, things changed when Dale Beaumont retired?

Oh, absolutely. Just fell . . . everything went. See, they brought in Jones. Jones came from the Colorado State, I think. He was the head man there, and he came here. We all wanted him; we all voted for him; we all pushed him. But boy, he just turned tails.

One of the other things I wanted to ask you today was about your work as President of the Pioneer Ditch Company.

The Pioneer Ditch comes out of the river right behind the Hilton Hotel, and it's about four miles long. It has the oldest water right of any ditch in this valley. Next top one is the tribe, of course. And it comes out at the river there, and it used to supply the Matley Ranch, which now has been developed. It's gone. But then, it supplies the Nash Ranch, Steel Nash.

They were the ones who initially dug the ditch?

Yes. It goes from there, then it goes to Avansino Ranch, and then it went to the Pezzi Ranch, which is my uncle. That's all power company now. Then, it supplied Ferrari Ranch, and then it supplied all those little places going to Hidden Valley. Along Pembroke Drive there's Harshbargers, and there's Dorothy Towne, and some other people in there. Then it supplies the university Main Station lab, and it

supplied the Questa Ranch, and it supplied the Jones Ranch. It ends in the Jones Ranch down by the sewer plant, and all the waste water empties in the Steamboat drain.

What kinds of things were you responsible for as president?

Well, I was responsible for maintaining the ditch, and to see that everybody got their right amount of water. I had Dorothy Towne, who owned property over on the corner of Pembroke and McCarran now; she was my secretary. I'd recruit the farmers to send me men to clean the ditch and keep it repaired, and settle arguments. [laughter] You see, that ditch supplied Pembroke Drive, which was south a mile or two, and that was the ditch going through the university property. But in the later years, they put warehouses in there. I used to have a hard time with that, because the people who lived over there didn't want to spend any money to clean their little ditch. Nobody wanted to spend money to clean their ditch. The result was that if they put too much water in the ditch, it would go over and go into the warehouses. Well, the warehouses would call the university, which was me. I'd try to tell them I have nothing to do with that. My thing is I measure the water out of the ditch. When it's in their ditch, it's their problem. If they can't get it through their property, it's not my problem. So I'd have trouble that way, and then there'd be a big battle and people would want to sue and this and that and the other, but it worked out.

So, you made sure they got their water, and once they got it, what they did with it had nothing to do with you.

Oh, absolutely. Yes. You know, once they measured their water, that was it.

How do you measure it out?

Well, they have measuring boxes. Now we measure it in acre feet, but in those days we measured by inches in this valley. There was a little box that came out, and it had a little cup, and then it had a cut on top, and had a cut like, say, four inches long and two inches thick. When that cup was full, and it hit the top of the board, that was their measure. Of course, the larger the water amount watered, the larger the box.

You've been on the water board in addition to that.

Oh, yes. Let's see, I retired in 1985, and I was probably on ten years before that, so I don't know how many years that makes it.

Pretty close to twenty-five.

Yes. I'm still on it, you know. I'm the secretary-treasurer of it, and I'm responsible for section five, which takes in everything all down Mill Street and all the way down to the sewer plant, all the way to Hidden Valley and all Pembroke drive, all that area, comes clear up to the Hilton; everything east, that way.

What kinds of decisions and powers do you have as a member of the water board?

Myself? Well, like I said, I'm the secretary-treasurer of it. My responsibility is to sign all checks. So I sign all the checks, and I deposit the money, collect the thing and deposit the money. And then I'm a board member and just sit in on the board.

I'll tell you what the board does. By the way, [laughter] ninety-eight percent is Italians on the board. They're all ranchers from around here—Don Casazza, the president; Bob Quilici, the vice president. I'm the secretary-treasurer. But anyhow, the board, along with the water master—we pay one third of the water master's salary. The water master comes to every one of our meetings. Our main project is Boca. Now, Boca was started in 1935, and was completed in 1937, paid for by the ranchers here. Paid for by these ranchers here; that's right.

Not only did the farmers and the ranchers pay to have that built, but they owned it at one time, right?

Yes.

What happened?

Well, see, I don't know. All of a sudden, they passed these laws, and now the Bureau of Reclamation, the government, owns it. We get all our orders from the Carson City office, and from Sacramento, and from Denver. They tell us what to do, and we have to do it. They give us the choice of using the government to do it or hiring our own contractors, and when you get the government to do it, it's twice as much as you can hire your own contractor for to do it. But they have to have a man there, and it has to be to their specifications. If it's not, we have to bear the brunt. But we have to pay all the expenses on that.

Did they create an assessment district for it, or how did they do that?

Yes, sure, they had to, but I really don't know the workings of that. The Reclamation owns it now, but we're responsible for all the maintenance of it. We have a house up there, and we have a man, and if, say, the wildlife needs water, they call us up; we send our man. He opens up the water they want, like for the cottonwoods that they're planting downstream, the fish, everything else. We control the lake; we keep the lake, along with the water master. We have a lot of trouble with people where the water comes out of the lake, to go towards Squaw Valley. There are a lot of those people in there who have canoes and motels and stuff, and they build down on the river. Last year when we had that flood, it washed out all those bridges and everything else. They called the water board.

Ah: "Do something." [laughter]

Yes. We have a heck of a time with the people up around the lake, because whoever controls the thing, they'll let them build the houses down on the water level. Then, when the storm comes and wind comes, they call us up and say, "Water's coming in our windows." It's not our fault, you know. It's not our fault. At certain times of the year, like now, we have to bring the lake down to a certain level for flood control. We have to do that with Boca. We have to do that with Prosser, and we have to do that with Stampede. Last month we had so much water we didn't know what to do. Well, now we haven't got any

storms. The lake is down a foot and a half, and Boca's down, because we have to bring them down. It's federal law. We have to bring them down for flood control. So, that's where it is now. But now, unless we get some of these storms, we're going to fill Boca. We're going to fill it up, and we may not fill Tahoe. It all depends on the storms now. A foot and a half of water in Lake Tahoe is a lot of water, and we have to keep that at a certain level at 62.27. We have to keep it at that level; we can't go over that. So we regulate those through the water master.

Oh, and this year, you know, we had an earthquake, so we had to repair the spillway, and we had to have it checked by the Reclamation Bureau for cracks, and that's ongoing right now. But it didn't disturb anything, so far as we know. And then, whatever the board tells us, like three years ago, we had to put all new valves on the gates and all the outlets. The Bureau of Reclamation tells us we have to do it. We have to pay for it, so we say, of course, now, how much is it going to cost? It started out like \$250,000. Well, you know how the government works. Wound up we had to pay over \$600,000 for those valves, and they shipped them in from Argentina or some place. We got them all in, and they're all paid for now, but the old ones were thirty or forty years old. Now, we kept one. It's supposed to be here, some place at the historical society here. [Nevada Historical Society] We donated one of those valves for that, because George Ball—he's a water consultant here and a relative of mine [laughter]—he's on the board, too, so he suggested that we give that to the historical society. So they have it some place. I don't know where it is.

Tell me about the Cattlemen's Association in Fallon.

Yes, the Cattlemen Association. I've been on the Cattlemen Association for I don't know how many years, probably forty years, maybe more. Let me tell you how I got on the Cattlemen's board. As you know, I still buy calves and stuff for 4-H kids and FFA kids and still do their training for them and get them all ready. But you see, the 4-H kids had the Fallon bull sale, and I was the instructor for it, for the kids. It kept getting bigger and bigger, and then the Cattlemen approached us and wanted to know if they could come in with us and expand the sale. So we fought back and forth, and Tom Gallagher, who runs Gallagher Livestock—he's passed on now, but him and I were good friends, and we were both strong for 4-H and FFA kids—we merged, and they were supposed to pay the kids so much. After every sale they'd pay them so much. They'd done that for years. Then, they came to me, and I was president of that for one year, too, by the way, for the sale. But anyway, they came to me and they said, "We want to get some bigger kids to open and close gates and keep the cattle coming for the sale, and feed, and sell feed, and all that kind of stuff."

So I came up here, and I recruited the college kids, and that went fine. They had that Aggie Club, and I'd say, "I need ten men on Friday, I need ten kids on Saturday, and they're going to do this and that." They'd meet me down there, and I'd set them all out in the corrals, get everything set up. It went along for maybe ten years or so. Then the kids decided they wanted more money, so we had a meeting, and the board voted it down. So, the kids said hell with it. They're not going to come. So, they quit.

Then the FFA kids from Fallon, we recruited them. They came in, and they still do it now. They're all ranch kids, and they're good. If you got bulls in there, you go to them and you say, "I need ten bales of straw today. I need so many bales of alfalfa. I need this. I need that." They do it all. They put straw down for them in the corrals, and they do a good job. That's where that sits now. The sale this year's going to be the nineteenth and twentieth of February. It's always around there. The sale is on Saturday. Friday morning we have a breakfast for all the consigners. Then we have a meeting, and we ask

them, “Is there anything that you think we’re not doing right?” We’d juggle the sale back and forth, and we’d give it all free. Then, at night, we’d give a big party for all the consigners, free. First it started out free. But then, it got so big—bands and music and drinks and the whole thing. We’d feed, probably, five, six, seven hundred people, but all donated stuff. I used to go out and get people to donate eight or ten boxes of potatoes and whatever. Then, I’d go down, sifting on Friday, and sale on Saturday. I’d go down on Thursday, because people would come in from Utah, Idaho, and California and Oregon, and they’d come in at night, and I’d have to be there to show them the numbers and the corrals and put them in. So they’d pay my motel room and my meals and stuff.

What does a sifter do?

Well, there are three sifters and a veterinarian. We have a certain area, and we have a sheet. I used to make up a sheet that said, “Excellent, medium, large,” anything. We’d run every bull in front of us, through the alleyway. We started at eight in the morning; it would take us to, maybe, three in the afternoon. But then, in those days we didn’t have computers, so we’d work half of the night making up the sale order, making up the sheet of the sifted bulls, and post them, and all that stuff. But now, with computers, hell, we got everything done. But the sifters, that’s what they do.

Then, if there’s a veterinary question like if their scrotum or eyes or something is wrong, feet not right, you know, lice. No trimming—they’re range-ready bulls. There can’t be any trimming. They have to be very careful. I was elected to be charge of the sifters. So I’d get the sifters and before the sale was starting, I’d take them around and show them the type of cattle that was there. The way the sale order worked, the best bull was never sold first, you know. Maybe you’ll give this guy a top rating of 3X or something, and then here you come down to the bottom of the sale, and you have a bull that’s better than the one you had 3X, so you had to be careful. I’d take them around and do that sort of thing, so they’d have some idea. I knew the bulls, because I was down there from Wednesday, penning all the bulls, and I knew pretty much where the bulls were. When I got to be seventy-five years old, it was hard for me, because some bulls are gentle, but some bulls are not. They’ll come down, and they’ll take you. I got so that I got scared I couldn’t get over the fence fast enough. I decided that I’d quit, and I did. I retired. But now, it’s easy for me, because they got all computers. There’s nothing left for us to do after the thing. So, I haven’t been back. Well, I go down, but I mean, I haven’t been on the committee for the last about four years now.

I’ve been looking at the Sagebrush Rebellion, and I came across one or two people who said that in their opinion the Cattlemen’s Association was often influenced by the federal government, that they were almost the arms of the BLM. What do you think about that?

It all depends who’s in office, or who’s in the head of the organization as to whether the ranchers are in the government’s pocket or vice versa. There’s a lot of politics involved in that. That’s about all I can say about that.

Tell me the difference between range cattle and inside cattle.

Oh, well. That’s real easy. Range cattle have to be rustlers. I mean, they have to go out and support on whatever they can find. Where fed cattle in pastures, you might have one head to the acre, but

on range cattle, you might have to have fifty acres for one head, one AUM. They have to be go-getters; they have to be rustlers; they have to go. They have to have good feet and good legs. When you judge cattle, you judge them totally different, because you don't want a big, big animal on the range, because it consumes too much feed. For years the Hereford were the main source of that. In a lot of places they still are. But now they got so many different breeds that just about anything goes. But they don't get the care that the cattle in the pasture do. They have to be smaller, and they have to have to have good legs and feet. They have to have a constitution with a body to produce a nice calf, the qualities to produce a nice calf.

On one of your buying expedition you bought a particular bull for the Peris.

Oh, yes. Peris. I don't know if you know them very well, but they're characters. They're characters. So they'd call me up, and I'd buy their bulls. I'd buy bulls for them; I'd buy bulls for Damontes; I'd buy bulls for Quilicis; I'd buy bulls for Oppios. I was down at the sale, see, and I knew the bulls. They'd all come to me to ask me which bulls. So I'd buy bulls, and that's a tough situation, because one guy will pay top price. He'll pay whatever it takes to get a good bull. The other guy, he's buying money. He's buying price. He's not buying bull; he's buying the price. And you have different things. Some people like rangy bulls; some like short bulls. It depends on the size of their cows, so it's quite a hassle. I bought bulls for Peri for years. I bought them Red Angus bulls; I bought them Charolais bulls; I bought them Angus bulls. They'd come to me, and they'd say, we've got these sort of cows. And I'd say, well, let's try this. Well, anyway, this particular time, I asked these guys if they were going to come down, so I'd be looking for their bulls. And Peri said, "No, we're not coming down."

I was out sifting in the corrals, and it comes over the microphone, "Art Cerfoglio, come to the office."

We're busy there. Well anyway, I went to the office, but I was kind of fuming, because they told me it was Joe Peri, see. He comes on the phone, and I was hot. I said, "Joe, what do you want?"

He said, "I decided I want to buy a bull."

I said, "Fine, Joe. I'll buy you a bull." But I said, "It's going to start at \$3,000, and I want a \$500 leeway." I can go \$3,500 or I can go whatever, but I said, "I'll buy you a bull. I'll buy you a good bull." Oh, he hollered and he hemmed and he hawed. And I said, "Joe, take it or leave it. I don't have the time."

"Oh," he said, "go ahead." So, he did.

So these bulls came in, Angus bulls, registered Angus bulls. These bulls they have at these sales are never turned out. They're no good for the range, because they got the water in the corral and the grain right there in the pens. We sift them because it's a range-ready bull, but you know, sometimes they get pretty fat. So this nice big bull came along, and I started to bid. Connelly from up Mountain City wanted the bull, too, so he bid, we bid, we bid. I went to \$3,500, and I bought the bull. Well, that topped the sale. Then they got publicity: they bought the champion bull, the highest price bull and all that stuff. Then I told Joe, I said, "Joe, now you take this bull. You get fifty cows, or whatever you want to do, put him in the pasture with your best cows, and breed them to this bull."

"Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." Well, they took the bull home, and they turned him out on the range. Well, one day, they go to find the bull, and they couldn't find the bull, so they called me up. They lived down the canyon, and the bull was raised at S Bar S, but the university property goes down the canyon. They called me and said, "We can't find our bull. Is he up in your fields?"

And I said, "I don't think so." But I said, "You're welcome to come and look."

So they came and looked, couldn't find the bull.

Then I gave them hell for turning him out on the range. Well, see, the bull went out. In about a week, he got sore feet. Then he went over to the water hole, and he couldn't walk. He laid down. And they couldn't find him up in the mountains. They looked and they looked and looked, and finally, they found him one day. Well, there was no way to get any equipment in there. So they hired Q and D Construction with a big ninety . . . the bucket was so big we could put the bull in there. You had to go over rocks and timbers and stuff with this big machine. Well anyway, they skinned him all up, but we got him out and brought him home.

So then the war began. Every day they'd call me, "Well, he's got this. He's got that."

"Well, Joe, you know, I told you not to turn the thing out." Anyway, to make a long story short, they brought the bull back and nursed him back, but he was never the same bull. So from then on, I told him, "Joe, that's it. Don't call me no more. I'm not buying nothing for you no more. You're on your own. You go ahead. And don't bother me." And he never has. But you know, they threw that money away. They're tight in one way, and the other way they don't pay any attention. So that's the story on that bull.

[laughter] OK. We're sort of on to people. One of the first people I wanted to ask you about was Nick Sorgi, because his name has come up several times. He was sort of a central financial figure.

I got some stuff in here that I just want to tell you. I don't know if I told you. He came over from Italy at about fifteen to sixteen years old, and he landed in New York City. He started to shine shoes and that corner stuff, but that wasn't his thing, so somehow he came to Nevada, but nobody knows if he had relatives here or not. He came to Nevada, and he got a job working for Senator Pat McCarran. I think I told you some of that already, but maybe not. Anyway, he got that job, and he worked there for two or three years, and then he quit. Oh, I got a lot of little things to say, but I'm just going to hit the top, like hiding his money and all that stuff. He saved every penny, every penny. He wouldn't even draw his wages when he was working for McCarran.

So, you got scared.

Yes. There were other Italian people working there, and when their payday came they'd take their money and walk to Virginia City from there. You know, you had a drink and whatever they done. But not Sorgi. The other Italian people would tell him, "You know, maybe when you quit, they're not going to pay you. And you've worked all this time for nothing."

So, he got to thinking, and he said, "Well, I think I'll tell them I'm going to quit." And he did, and they paid him. That's when he walked to Virginia City, and before he went into town, he put his money under a rock, and that's when they saw them guys call this guy out of the thing and hang him, because he was cheating.

But then, he moved to Reno, to Washoe County here, and he bought the Stevenson Ranch, which is now the one the Damontes have, bought that and kept it for a couple years. Then, he sold it to Mr. Stevenson. He married a Holcomb girl, Mr. Stevenson. So, they bought that, and they kept it until the Depression. Then he started to finance people who wanted to buy ranches during the Depression, see.

Like I told you, my dad went to him, wanted to borrow the money, and he said, "You know, Pete, if you miss one payment, you're gone." My dad didn't know how to read or write or nothing. But anyway, he didn't get it. But he gave Damontes the money to buy the Double Diamond Ranch; he gave

them the money to buy all the property they have now, you know—the Brown Ranch, the Lyons Ranch, all those ranches—Sorgi financed them. Then, in 1934 he got in partners with Kearney. He was a big-time attorney here, 1934, and they bought the Overland Hotel. They kept it for a year, turned it over, and made a big profit, see. So then, he just started to finance everybody. He financed just about every Italian guy there was around here. But he was tough. Boy, if they didn't pay, he took over, and that's how he made his money. He lived to be ninety-four. But that's what he done. He belonged to the gun club down here in Sparks at the Boynton thing, and he was a regular guy, he was tight, and he was tough. But he helped a lot of people. He was honest, you know what I mean? But what he said, when you didn't pay, you got cooked.

Let me run some other names by you. These are names associated with various ranches. The Nichols family?

Oh, yes. Yes. Their ranch was where the Helm's Pit now is. It started there, and it went down Prater Way, and down there, and they were neighbors with the Ghiggeris; they were neighbors with the Gonis, Bakers, and all those people. Al and I used to run cattle together at Dog Valley. He had heart trouble, Al, you know. He died pretty young. We used to ride together up there, but every once in a while, we'd have to stop, and he'd have to get off, catch his breath—but a nice guy. They owned that property for quite a while, and he had two boys and a girl. One was Hage's wife. She died young, too. I don't know when they sold. They had nothing. That was all swamp and grass. They raised the grass. Then, he loaned money, too. He was connected with Humphreys, Frank Humphrey and Marvin Humphrey, and they had the Pitchfork Ranch in Vinton, California. He made money, and he helped a lot of people. He was the nicest guy.

How about Oppios?

Oppios? That's another story. They had a ranch on Glendale. The old folks, typical Italians, they worked. If they had five dollars, they bought something. They owned half of Sparks at one time—the Bowlarium and all of those. They still own quite a few properties. They had, I think, Charlie, Santino, Albert, Gene—there's one more. Then they had three girls in the family. Well, one day the old man and the old lady—grandma and grandpa—were going to California to buy some grapes, and they ran off of the road somehow, and were both killed. That left the kids, and as usual, kids don't get along. I don't know who they sold the ranch to in Glendale, and then the grandson, Alan, who was Charlie's boy, he's the one that bought the ranch out in Spanish Springs. Now, he's moved to Idaho, bought two ranches in Idaho, and his son is running the ranch here. Very hard workers, very honest people. I knew them all. They milked cows; they raised vegetables; they peddled vegetables—the typical Italian thing, you know. And the lady worked. Besides cooking for the men and everything, she worked out in the fields, all of the day. At lunch, she'd go in, maybe, at eleven o'clock and prepare the meal for the men when they came in. Then, she'd go back out. Five o'clock, she'd come in again. Typical ladies. My mother was the same way—milked cows, everything. The ladies worked those days more than the men, really.

How about Curtis? The ones up by Queens Way.

Yes. I went to their place of birth in Italy, when we went over, in Piemonte. They're Piemontes. They came over here and landed in Montague, northern California, and they bought . . . let me make sure I get this straight. [sound of pages rustling] They bought the ranch in Sparks in 1925, and they bought it from Joe Bisignano. Do you know Bisignanos? They bought the ranch from them. It was 150 acres, and Bisignanos had bought the ranch from Frazier, who was the original settler there, whatever you call it. The old man and the old lady died. Then John took over, and they lived there until Sparks moved in. They had a little house before, but then they built the brick house, and they lived in that, and about three or four years ago, they sold the last of it. Most of them are dead.

There's the kids now—Harold Curti, who's Barbara Curti's husband. He was managing that now. Harold married a Damonte, so they took over the ranch there, and then they moved. They sold it to a developer there, and they bought a ranch in Coleville. Now he's retired. Well, he's semi-retired, and they raise springer heifers and that kind of stuff. It's so entangled. There was John and George, and then some girls. George got called in the army. This is a story that I hear from them, one side, really. When he got back, why, John and them wouldn't let him back in the dairy herd, but he had married the Damonte girl, Gladys. They had 250 acres out there. He claims that they wouldn't let him in; they stole his cows and wouldn't give him back his share of the cows, so he moved out there. Of course, he opened up a dairy out there, which they just sold two or three years ago. So that's the story on them.

Do you remember anything about the Olsens?

I knew them. I knew the old man and the old lady when they had the ranch down there just below Curtis. They had the ranch there. Then, the boys bought a ranch in Fallon. They're in Fallon, now. Then, after a few years, they sold this place, but I don't know who they sold it to. The old folks moved to Fallon, too, with the boys. Now they got a very big dairy down there—a good dairy. But the grandma and grandpa have been dead for quite a few years, and now, the next generation, he's retired. Now, his boys are running the dairy. So it was three or four generations there. They've expanded; they're doing real good. I went to Barbara Curti's retirement party, and he was there, and he said, "We'll get together. We'll get together." But you know, at the party and everything else, he left, and I left, and I never got to see him, never got any more story. I don't know how many times Queens Way was changed in names; it changed four or five times. So each one has a little story about that.

A couple other people: you knew Maureen Brady Cirone when she was at the dairy ranch—Maureen Brady Cirone?

Oh, well, yes. Sure. Yes.

They had a dairy farm there kind of behind where Shopko is now, and the middle school. It would have been south of Oppios.

She came from back East someplace, and I know when he married her that they moved up on the west of Washoe Lake. She was so lost. Poor kid, she came, then nobody was up there. You have to go up on that dirt road. She used to call, and we used to talk about it all the time. Then Joe got playing around, with race horses and stuff, and they got a divorce. When I left Lighting W I had to find a replacement for myself at Weise's, so I found a kid that graduated from college here. He's a teacher now. Anyway, he

took over, and he used to see me riding around in the pick-up with a cigar and stuff, but what he didn't know was that I was up at four or five in the morning, and then, after supper, I'd work.

He was trying to run range cattle the way they were running them here at the university. Well, that doesn't work. You take a range cow that's never been in a corral, it'll stay there. You put her in a corral to have a calf, she's so damn nervous, that if she does have the calf she'll tromp it. I tried to tell him. Well, to make a long story short, he lasted about six months. The, Weise called me up again, so then, I found Joe Cirone, and he got the job. He stayed there for quite a while, until they got a divorce. Then Maureen, I guess she still lives down in that two-story house. Does she? Down some place over here? In Sparks?

No. That's where their dairy was. She's living just north of Lightning W with her son Wayne.

Oh, well, I'd like to see her. But Joe, he kind of lost it. He got tangled up with these horses, and went broke, I think. Then, he married some other girls down in Texas or something or other. I don't quite remember all that story, but I liked Maureen. She was nice. And the boys are nice. Both boys are nice.

Yes. How about Parlantis?

Oh, well, Parlanti, there's Pete and Lloyd. And of course, they sold this spot down here. I think there are some girls, but I don't know how many girls. I knew some of the girls, but I don't remember their names. But now, they have a ranch in—you turn off before you get to Portola. I've been to their ranch lots of times. They got a nice ranch there, and of course, Pete is eighty-something now; he don't work much anymore. Lloyd's married, and he goes back and forth, and Pete stays up there sometimes, but then they fight, you know. [laughter] They got a nice place, and they run a few head of cattle. They get a lot of snow most of the time up there, and the fences go down and stuff. So in the winter months they send their cows to California and graze them down there, and then they'd bring them back in the springtime. But before they bring them back, you got to fix the fences. But they got a nice place, and I think they want to sell it now, because neither one of them wants to mess much with it, but it's a heck of a nice place. They raise a lot of hay, and it's a nice location.

How about Ghiggeris? Gino Ghiggeri?

Oh, yes. Sure. I know all the Ghiggeris. Well, Gino's still alive, you know.

Yes, I interviewed him earlier.

Oh, did you? Did you go down to the ranch?

The one on Prater, yes.

Yes. Well, I knew the whole family, and they had the place there, and then they'd rent some other places out South Virginia here. We were neighbors, and we were just kids together.

You knew Silas Ross, also, didn't you?

Oh, yes. Yes. I knew him. He was a mortuary here.

Right. And he was the original owner of the ranch that Gino has now.

Was he? I didn't know that. I know his daughter. She's married. I haven't seen her in years now, but I knew Silas Ross. He was quite a prominent man in the city here, old Silas Ross, but I don't quite remember much about him. I know what he looked like. I don't remember now too much about him.

How about D'Andreas?

Yes. I knew them. They had a ranch down below Vista Boulevard. Now it's going to be a golf course, I guess. The only thing I know about them is that the old man and the old lady died, and Joe Gaspari's wife Jenny, she's related. They left the ranch to the boy. But the boy—did he pass away?

Yes.

Yes, I think he just passed away three or four years ago. But the poor kid was unbalanced. I went down to see him one time. I didn't know he was unbalanced. I went down there and, "Oh," he opened up his arms to me, and he had a pond there and, "Oh, come down any time. Come down fishing. I got all kind of fish."

One day I went down there. When I got down there, boy, he damn near was going to shoot me, "Get out of here! Get off of the place! I never told you you could come fishing here." So, I just walked off. Jenny and a couple of other daughters were taking care of it, but now I guess they sold it. And then, you know, he was in the hospital for a long time. He had cancer. I don't know what happened there.

How about various owners of the Shadow Ranch? Did you know Trosis, or hear anything about Trosis when they owned Shadow Ranch out on Shadow Lane?

Ah, let me see. What have I got? [Sound of papers rustling] I didn't know them. The next owner of Shadow was Monaei Lindley. Yes, Monaei Lindley. I don't remember when she owned it, though. I remember her more when she owned the Bella Vista. But anyway, Monaei Lindley came out here as a divorcée, I think. She had money, and she married, I don't know, a few times. I knew her personally. She was a nice lady, but she had a booze problem. When she left the Shadow Ranch she went over to Bella Vista, which is behind Rattlesnake Mountain. It's owned now by Butler. But that's a bum place. All the diseases from all the valley settled down there. There's no drainage. The soil is alkali and salt and stuff. The whole valley drains down there. The lower end of the Double Diamond Ranch and Bella Vista come together down there. It all drains down there, and they have a hell of a time with cattle. They have to vaccinate five times more than you do any place else. They lose their hair, and it's a bad place.

But she married a guy that used to work for my folks years ago. She married him, and they ran it. She might have been down there about ten years, I guess. I don't remember exactly. But they never done anything with it. It was there, and they run half-shod. They'd change foremen every—when I was at the university, they'd hire these guys, and they knew nothing about ranching. They'd come over and want to borrow equipment, want to know about this, and want to know about that. They didn't do nothing. Then,

this Butler guy—he's a businessman from San Francisco. He owns it now. Last year they lost a whole bunch of cattle again, and they blamed the power lines and all this stuff, but it's in the ground. Never was any good for cattle. I guess it's up for sale now, but he wants so damn much that nobody's touching it.

The next people after Lindley were Sanfords at Shadow Ranch.

Yes. Oh, yes. Sonya in Fallon, I knew her dad. I knew them when they had the John Deere dealership here up on the hill. There was Les and John, I think. Les was Sonya's dad, I think. I just knew them from Sonya when she was in 4-H and that kind of stuff. I knew them because we used to buy equipment from them, parts and stuff like that.

Mr. Dan Wheeler owned a lot of property in south Reno, west of South Virginia Street, and he started way before, probably in the 1870s or something like that. He had a massive amount of property. He ran several bands of sheep, of seven, eight thousand head of sheep. He ran his sheep in the mountains west of Reno, up all the way from South Virginia, clear up to Hunter Lake, and all that range. In the summertime the sheep were up there; they'd lamb up there. Then, when fall came, he'd bring them down, and he'd rent pastures from all the ranchers in the valley south of town, and they would clean up all the feeds, all the forage and stuff.

Then, Mr. Dan Wheeler passed away, and his sons took over. Carl Wheeler was the main of the sons, and he lived on the corner of South Virginia, which is now Del Monte, the corner of South Virginia and Del Monte Lane. They ran it for a few years, and then the Depression hit, and they lost all their property. Then the banks took over, and they leased the ranches to whoever could afford to lease them, real cheap, because the banks had all that property. They had livestock; they had horses; they had cattle. They didn't know what to do with it.

My dad leased the Wheeler Ranch there, and we ran that for about seven, eight years, and then later on Jaksick bought 800 acres of the Wheeler Ranch what's now the [Lakeridge] golf course. Ballardini bought west up clear to Hunter Lake, from Steamboat Ditch west. They held it till a couple of years ago. They still own 250 acres, but they sold the rest to some people in Minnesota, and eventually that will be houses up in there.

That was a big outfit to go under during the Depression.

Yes. All those Italians—well, Fife and Peckham, they're not Italian, but they survived. They survived.

What was the difference between the ones that survived and the ones that didn't?

Well, the ones that didn't borrowed money and couldn't pay it back. But mostly it was because the older folks had passed on, and then the younger generation, there was too many of them, and they couldn't get along. That's why they went under. Pretty much the same scenario happened with Holcombs. When Grove Holcomb was alive, he was the kingpin, and he ran everything, but when his family passed away, the boys took over. Thad was the head of the boys, but then he got killed. Then the Depression hit, and the banks took over. Like where my daughter lives now, west of South Virginia, there was 400 acres there, and my dad ran that from 1929 to 1936. And then that started to sell. Pieces started to sell. Caffrey was the first one to come in, in 1934, and built a big two-story house there, and they bought the first forty

acres off of the Holcomb place. Now, it's been divided. Then, Darringer came along and bought the biggest part of it. Then, they sold some to the guy that has the Reno CB mix, concrete. Bruno Benna bought a big chunk of it, and other people bought. Now there's probably twenty different or forty different owners. One's got five acres; one's got three acres. It's all subdivided, but when we had it, there were no houses there, none. That mountain from Holcomb clear down to Huffaker, there were no houses; it was all bare land.

I got a little ahead of myself. After my dad quit Wheelers, he went to work for Holcombs. He was the irrigator for Holcombs. We lived on the Old Virginia Road, and that's when I was telling you about the droughts and stuff. [laughter] I remember that we had an old saddle horse my dad used to use to irrigate. His name was Rodeo. We were kids, you know, seven, eight, nine years old, whatever we were. The horse, my dad used to use him all day long, and then turn him out in the pasture at night. Us kids wanted to ride, you know. Well, we pestered him so much that when we'd go in the field, he'd open his mouth and chase us, with his ears down. It took us—we must have been fourteen or fifteen before we could stand up to him. But that's how smart the horse got, because there were three of us kids, and we'd always pester him.

I remember that we used to live over there on the old road, the old road to go to Virginia City, and my dad used to have to go around up Holcomb Lane and then up Thomas Creek Road to the Holcomb Ditch to get the water. My dad used to walk up here to get the water. Then I used to have to ride the horse, and mind you, I was a little kid. I used to worry about that, having to come down, cross Virginia Street and go up Holcomb Lane, then go up the thing. I made it, but I worried. I couldn't sleep at night. [laughter] But anyway, before we ran the Holcomb Ranch, we ran that. So that's pretty much the story of the Holcombs. Holcomb Ranch was where Double Diamond is now, and then Damonte bought that from the bank—the Double Diamond Ranch. Then, he sold that, and he bought Christianson Ranch and the Brown Ranch and the Lyon Ranch, and the Stevenson Ranch. Now, the Stevenson Ranch was the Holcomb's, part of the Holcomb. The Lyon Ranch is where Curtis live now—the dairy. The Brown Ranch is where Benny lived, the big house. The Christianson Ranch was down right next to Reno Sprinkler. But now you there's nothing left. You don't know where you're at anymore. There are buildings and streets and all that kind of stuff.

The school's in a different location than it originally was.

When I went there, there was no corner. It was on the corner of South Virginia and Huffaker. The school was here, let's say. Now they moved it up here, and Longley comes in here. Here's the big service station, and this is Huffaker that goes east. But the school was about two blocks north of the intersection now. This old Huffaker here only goes as far as the creek here, and the Ferretto house is a brick house that sits here. The old regional Huffaker School's on the Bartley Ranch.

How about Ginocchio?

Oh, Ginocchio's—their place started on the corner of South Virginia, which used to be Filipelli Lane, but now it's Foothill Road. They run west along Foothill Road up but now there are houses. I don't know what that street is up by that Lenz School, but they ran south down as far as Les's Meat Block. Now it's owned by the Atlantis Corporation, all of that. My dad worked for him. I don't know what years it was, but it was a long time ago, way before the Depression. They raised a few cattle, and they raised

potatoes and onions and that kind of stuff. Old man Ginocchio had about four or five boys, and, I don't know, two, three or four girls. When he died, then the boys took over, and John and Willy, two oldest sons, ran the ranch. The rest got jobs out in the thing. Willy died early, then John ran it—I think John's been dead now maybe fifteen years. When he died, they leased the ranch out, whoever could get it. Then, finally they sold it. They sold it to Atlantis Club. You can't irrigate it. They took all the water rights off of it, and used it, I guess, for their buildings, because they have to have the water. They lease it now, and Ray Nyswonger leases it from them. Some of it's swamp, but the operating is dry, you know. He runs cattle on it now, and I guess they just keep it for further development, or they bought it for the water rights, or whatever you might want. The old barn is that old tin barn, remember, we saw over there. Old man Ginocchio built that, and then some of the boys were raising chickens and rabbits and that sort of stuff. So, that's pretty much the Ginocchio Ranch up till now.

After school, you would go over there and help?

Yes. They used to pick potatoes, and you have to separate the potatoes: the good potatoes and the medium-size potatoes and the pig potatoes, which are the little ones. My job was to pick the little ones, because they'd feed them to the hogs. They couldn't sell them. Then, they separate the seed, the regular, smaller-size seed. And the big potatoes, they'd sell them. But during the Depression, a lot of these ranchers would raise the onions and potatoes, have no sale for them. A lot of times they dumped them along the Truckee River, down by the university, to get rid of them. Sometimes they'd ship stuff, and then they'd get a freight bill. If the stuff didn't bring any money, they had to pay the freight bill and lose the crop, so it was tough during the Depression for those kinds of things. So, that's the way that one went. Where were we now?

Let's see, we covered Wheeler, and of course, that went to Redfield and then UNR.

Yes. Well, Redfield bought it from the university, I guess. They traded. How did that go, now? Fleischmann came into the picture. Gave him the Ladino Dairy up there with all the new buildings and everything else. But in 1934, I think it was, the university ran out of money. They didn't have any money to run the ranch, so they leased it out. That's when I went to work there, and we had a dairy there, and we had a big barn. I don't know who built the barn, but it was a big, beautiful barn. They just tore it down two or three years ago. It was about 200 feet long, and had two levels. It would store 250 tons of hay, and there was a milk parlor in there. I was the foreman there for the milk parlor. That's when I told you that we were milking about sixty or sixty-five head of cow. We could only milk eight at a time. You're talking a span of four, five hours, see. Say you started at four in the morning. Those first eight cows have to come in, then the next eight cows have to come in, because otherwise, you'd lose milk.

I had an old Swiss milker by the name of Charlie, and he lived up in the barn. We had two lived in the barn. He had a little yellow dog. He milked; that's all he done is milked. I used to deliver the milk to Model Dairy and stuff and irrigate the ranch and put up the hay and all that kind of stuff. I did all the outside work. But about every six or eight months—you can't blame the guy—he'd walk off, go get drunk. So I'd tell him, "Charlie, I don't blame you, but just tell me." In them days, we used to run the cattle out in the fields, not like now; they stay in the corral. They never go out in the fields any more. Well, I'd have to go out at two or three in the morning and gather the damn cattle in, but I never knew which eight was to go first. Of course, he knew it by heart, because that was his life. I'd see him lots of

times get a loaf of bread, and chunk off and get it in his mouth and then get the teat of a cow and squirt the milk in his mouth. My wife used to feed him. We used to feed him. So, I'd leave him stay in town two or three days. Then, I'd go down to the Mizpah and get him out of bed. He was in bed with somebody, you know. Then he'd come home, and then he'd feel sorry, and he'd buy all kinds of stuff for my wife to try and make up. [laughter] You can't blame the guy, but he just didn't have the gumption to say, "I'd like a few days off."

I stayed there till 1946. I don't remember what year Redfield bought, but Fleischmann came in and give them some money, and then they sold it to Redfield and moved the dairy up to Ladino, and it stayed there for I don't know how many years. Then they moved the Ladino dairy up there, but the same situation: no money to run it. Well, they hired a dairy manager, but the dairy went down, down. The buildings fell apart; they didn't paint them. They didn't have the money to keep it up. That's when Fleischmann came along and bought them the cows and the stuff, and give them the money to build the dairy. And you know, the dairy at one time was here.

On the campus?

On the campus, where the Ag building is now. See, when I went to school here, there were only two professors, Prof. Wilson and another one. The College of Agriculture was that brick building up here, the old brick building on campus as you come in, right behind Manzanita Lake. That's where I went to school. [laughter] So the building went on down, and of course, Fleischmann come along and they sold the Ladino to two Spanish fellows. I don't remember their names. Then they moved the dairy down on Mill Street, where Dermody has it now. He bought that property. When they sold that property, we moved the dairy down where it is now on the hill down on Jones Ranch, see. That's when I was at the university.

Part of that was also the Questa Ranch, right?

No. Questa was before you get to the dairy. It was on the Jones Ranch, where we built the dairy now. That's the Jones Ranch; that was the last part. Flick bought it, and then Gilbert, and then the university bought the Mapes Ranch from Gilbert. Gilbert and Flick bought the Questa Ranch, so when the university took it over it was the Mapes and the Questa Ranch. Then in later years, when I was there we bought that three hundred and some-odd acres of the Jones Ranch, and that's where we put the dairy. They sold the cows, and they get somewhere between \$400,000 and \$600,000 a year, still, from Fleischmann. But in order to get that, they had to keep the heifers. There had to be some dairy stock on the ranch. So that's why they have these heifers, and they raise them and breed them, and then when they're springers they sell. If they ever got rid of those heifers, they'd lose that money, see.

But it's been cut back considerably since you were there.

Oh, there's no more dairy. And we built a beautiful dairy. Oh, we had all flood control, and I recycled the manure. We had pens, low-feed pens for the cows to lay down and everything else. Then, when we washed the barn, we didn't have hoses—we just flooded. We put on a modern dairy. We had a beautiful dairy. But it's the same old story. We had students to milk, and you have to have a reserve, because at three in the morning a lot of the students sometimes don't show up. We had a dairy foreman, and first he didn't live on the spread, but then we moved a little house up there for him to live there. We

had boys and girls milking. Every day you have to have a regular bunch of kids involved. Sometimes if somebody wouldn't show up, and maybe the foreman was lazy, wouldn't get up to go see if they were there, but Cerfoglio was there. [laughter] I just lived a half a mile away, and of course, being a rancher like I was, hours didn't affect me. But a lot of those people worked for the university. They wanted work at eight, and 3:30 they want to go home. Then they don't want anything to do with the rest of it. They figure that they work for the state and that's their thing. It's hard to run a state ranch now, because of the labor laws. Ten o'clock, you have to give them a coffee break. Three o'clock, you have to give them a coffee break. You're out there haying, and you're out there working cattle—you have to shut down. They got to go and have their coffee. And then, of course, it was my job to watch that they wouldn't spend any more than fifteen minutes, but you'd have to go get them, and out in the fields, they'd have to grab a pickup to come in. We used to have our coffee room in the meats lab. It's tough.

And then, on weekends, the cows still have to milk, and the cows have to be fed, and you have to irrigate, and you have to do the whole thing. And you got to be damn careful. You cannot fire a guy. He has to just about commit a crime before you can get rid of a guy. And I was always on the committee to select people. But the catch was that I had two professors and me, being the superintendent there. I was looking for men that would work. These guys are looking for paperwork! Guy that graduated from some place, never fed a cow in his life, you know. We used to have a lot of trouble that way. But I was a favorite of the dean, and he was behind me, and I'd go to the dean, Beaumont. Oh, him and I are good friends. We still go to lunch and everything. But anyhow, I had the upper hand there because I could control it pretty much.

Then, like I told you before, I done all the buying of everything, and I traveled. I had a ranch foreman; I had a cow foreman. But before that they had split; they had a ranch foreman and they had a cow foreman, and they didn't get along. At that time I was working at Valley Road. When I first came to work at the university I went to Valley Road. Beaumont would send me down there, and I'd have to make a decision whether they put a fence here or make a ditch over here. I knew both of the guys well, and it made it hard. I didn't want to go down there, but Beaumont said, "Oh, go down for six months or so."

I went down, but before I went, I said, "I want to be the boss. If I'm not the boss, I'm not getting involved. I got enough problems already without the thing." So then, I was the big boss. Oh, I had some experiences there, I'll tell you. We hired a kid that graduated from Wisconsin. When we interviewed, I always made it clear that I'm the boss. You're the cow boss, but before you make any moves, it's got to come through me. So anyway, this kid come in and started to work, and at that time I was in between hiring a cow boss, so I was doing all the book work and the running of the ranch and everything else. My office was over in the middle of the complex, and the cow boss—I had him inside the meats lab. So, the kid comes to work, and first thing he does is get all the books I had directed to him and took them over to my office. I didn't say anything. I said, "Well, OK. That's all right, as long as you do your work, see." So, he worked there for a while. I used to have all my foremen come in the mornings, and we set down and say, "This has got to be done; that's got to be done." Then it's up to you. You do it. You got your crew. You do it. Well, he didn't want to do that. He wanted to go off by himself.

To make a long story short, he moved in, and he worked for a while, but we weren't getting along. Then, one day we had a bunch of heifers, five, six-month-old heifers, and I don't know how I found out, but I found out he was going to put a bull in there. So, I said, "You can't put a bull there."

"Why not?"

I said, "Because he'll breed those heifers."

"Oh, no. Those heifers won't come in heat till . . ."

I said, "You're crazy." I said, "We got a vet here. We'll go ask Dr. Drake," who was our vet. "If he okays it, OK." But I knew Drake wouldn't okay it.

So of course, Drake said, "No, you can't do that." So, that was one little sticker already.

Then, I'd come along in the afternoons, and I could never find him. Found out that he got a job sweeping the parking lot at Harrah's in the afternoons. [laughter] I could tell you all kinds of stories if you want to hear them. But anyhow, so I went to him, and I said, "Hey, you cannot do that. Your job is here."

Oh, then he threatened to go to the governor—at that time it was Laxalt; he threatened to go to the senator, and he threatened to go to those.

I says, "Take your best shot. You just take your best shot."

He was bluffing me. See, when you hire a guy at the university, he's got six month's probation. And it was under the probation. So he threatened all that stuff; he never done nothing, and at the end of the six months I just let him go. But you hire people like that. They graduated, but they have no concept of what the real life is, how you run cattle, and how you do that. But they're professionals at getting the best of the university. See, I had about ten or twelve apartments and houses that I used to lease out, first to the ranch hands if they wanted them, if not, then next to the students and so on down the line. They used to have to pay a small rent, and then some utilities. He came to me one day, and he said, "My electric heater don't work. I want to change it over to gas."

And I said, "Well, OK." Well, the university would pay for it if it was gas, but like a booboo, I never thought about it. I said, "Well, yes. I don't care." But then, when the bill came it was something! [laughter] But they work every angle that there is, those professional guys. So anyway, that's one of the little stories at the university. I got more. [laughter]

When I turned sixty-five, I decided I was going to retire, because my dad lived to be ninety-nine. He was retired for over fifty years. My mother worked like a dog all her life, farming, garden, milking cows. When we used to go to high school, sometimes—when there was a dance or party—we wouldn't go home. I think about it now, but when you were a kid you don't think about it, you know. Well, anyhow, I decided when I'm sixty-five I want to retire. I didn't tell my wife, didn't tell nobody. So I sat down in my office one morning and I wrote out a retirement form, and I brought it up to the university. Charles Specht was the head of Animal Science at that time. Oh, I got to tell you about that, too, but I'll finish this. He got that letter, and he called me up, and he says, "What the hell is all this? You can't retire."

I said, "The hell I can't. I'm going to retire."

Well, to make a long story short, my birthday was October 25th. They said, "No, no. You can't retire. What are we going to do?"

So, I stayed till January. I said, "You guys got to find somebody between now and January." Before that Animal Science was one division, and I was on the other side. I was always in conflict with the animal department, because they'd come down there, and they'd want some project done. Of course, it was up to me to do the projects that they wanted, because they'd get money. So, Animal Science didn't like me. When Beaumont retired, Jones came in, and he made Animal Science my boss! So, they had tried to fire me before—the Animal Science—because I'd say, "You can have this plot here." They wanted to go out in the middle of a field some place and disrupt the operation of the place. I'd say, "You can have this, you can have this, you can have that." They'd come down and plant trees. I remember old Edwin Miller—I think he's still here, vice president or something—one time came down and planted three or four thousand trees, then never came back and watered them or nothing. They all died. But anyway, they

became my boss. So I worked for them. But I got one glowing evaluation after another, even from the cattlemen, because I would do the job.

You said there was something else you wanted to tell me about Charles Specht?

Well, he turned to be my boss, you know. I thought that they would make it hard for me, but I went, worked for them. When they were my boss, I turned around and worked for them. They didn't expect me to, but hell, they were paying my wages. So we got along fine, and nothing changed. They saw what I was doing. It's hard to find somebody who will work all that time. I had hired a cow boss, and when I retired, I asked him if he wanted my job, and at first he said no. I said, "Because I can give you the job, if you want it." And he said no. Then, he got to thinking, and he accepted. He took the job. But then, everything went downhill. They kept taking the money away; they kept taking this away; they kept taking that away. I had a shop. We used to do all our own work. They closed the shop down, fired the mechanic. They just demolished everything. There was just nothing. Now there's one guy down there. Hopefully, this new dean, if they'll let him, maybe he'll bring some of it back. But we spent millions of dollars down there. I leveled all those fields; I added a lot of fields, and land-planed them, cemented. We cement all our own ditches, you know, do all our own work. But now it's all for naught.

It looks kind of abandoned when you go by.

Oh, yes. But maybe, this new dean . . . I talked to him, and he may bring the meats lab back some. We used to kill twice a week, then sell the meat. Now they kill sheep now and then. But they don't do nothing; there's nothing there.

What do they do with the heifers that they're keeping now?

Well, the heifers, they sell them. I go every month with Curtis and stuff. They do the same thing, after they sold the dairy they had. You bring them here in Fallon, you don't get nothing for them. You get maybe two or three, four hundred dollars. You bring them to California, you get sixteen, seventeen, twenty-five hundred dollars for the same animal, because there's millions of dairies down there, big dairies, especially down Tulare and that stuff. There's maybe fifty dairies, 5,000 cows apiece. So, they're looking for these heifers because they feed these cows such high concentrate that in four or five years they're burnt out, so they have to have a replacement. So, the university does that, too. They bring them down there and sell them that way.